

**Printing, Hebrew Book Culture and *Sefer Ḥasidim***

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## ABSTRACT

### **Printing, Hebrew Book Culture and *Sefer Ḥasidim***

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This dissertation is a contribution to the fields of the history of the Hebrew book and early modern Jewish cultural history. It is a study of *Sefer Ḥasidim*, a text that originated in the medieval Rhineland, in its first two printed editions (of 1538 and 1581, respectively). By analyzing these editions closely, and by comparing them to their manuscript antecedents, it is possible to determine how the work of printing changed *Sefer Ḥasidim* and how printing shaped readers' understanding of the text. These investigations advance the argument that the printing of Hebrew books was a creative act, not merely a process of reproduction and dissemination. Like all creative productions, moreover, these editions can be read as witnesses to the particular social and cultural contexts from which they emerged—in this case, a period of upheaval in Jewish life and European society. Moreover, the varied cast of characters who produced these editions—printers, editors, proofreaders, press workers, among others—were influenced by commercial, intellectual and religious interests unique to the sixteenth century and to Italy. These interests left their mark on the texts of *Sefer Ḥasidim* that emerged from their presses (in the form of censorship and emendations), as well as their associated paratexts (e.g. prefaces, tables of contents and introductions).

Part one of this dissertation focuses on the first printed edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim*, produced by a group of Jewish silk entrepreneurs who called themselves “the partners” in the city of

Bologna. It contains two chapters. Chapter one examines who the partners were and their social position within Bolognese Jewry, as well as the legal and institutional framework that regulated the production of Hebrew books in Bologna. Chapter two is a close reading of their edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* and a comparison to the extant *Sefer Ḥasidim* manuscripts. This chapter highlights three areas where the partners innovated: They ascribed the authorship of *Sefer Ḥasidim* to the medieval pietist R. Judah he-Ḥasid; they prefaced the text with a lengthy table of contents; and they censored the text to eliminate a number of references to Christianity and Christians.

Part two focuses on the second edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim*. It contains three chapters. Chapter three examines the people who created this edition: the Christian printer Ambrosius Froben of Basel and his Jewish and Christian associates. Chapter four focuses on the many paratexts that accompanied Froben's edition. These documents present *Sefer Ḥasidim* as a canonical work of scripture and *aggadah* (rabbinic lore) intended for young students. Chapter five focuses on the text of *Sefer Ḥasidim* in Froben's edition and the emendations Froben and his editors introduced. The chapter highlights three kinds of emendations: censorship of anti-Christian passages; the removal of phrases in languages other than Hebrew; and the introduction of punctuation and glosses. Taken together, these emendations create the impression that *Sefer Ḥasidim* was a "classic" of far greater import than it may have had at the time of its composition.

This dissertation closes with a conclusion that describes how the data contained in the previous chapters might be useful for students of the history of the book and Jewish modernity.

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## Acknowledgements

As a child, I would peruse the shelves of my grandfather's library with curiosity and wonder. My grandfather, Rabbi Samuel Volkman, of blessed memory, was a scholar of Hebrew texts and human relations, and an avid reader. He read widely in poetry, the sciences and the arts, not to mention, biblical exegesis and religious philosophy. Books lined his and my grandmother Sally's shelves, sometimes three rows deep.

"How could one person read so much?" I often wondered. "Did my grandparents' apartment contain the sum of all human knowledge?"

Two of my grandfather's books always caught my eye: The large, leather-bound, gold-embossed, two-volume set of the *Midrash Rabbah*, in its Vilna printing (1855). They sat on either end of a tall shelf in the living room.

"What are those books?" I asked my grandfather when I was little.

"They hold the shelf up," he jokingly replied.

I think about that tongue-in-cheek remark now as I write this dissertation—dedicated to his memory and his example of humanism and humaneness. Books like those in my grandfather's library not only hold our shelves up, so often in Jewish history, they've held our lives up too.

"The books of the Jews verily were their life." So wrote Fritz Bamberger, of blessed memory, my uncle Michael's father, in a small book of quotations entitled *Books are the Best Things*. He produced the book for the Society of Jewish Bibliophiles in 1962.<sup>1</sup> I may have en-

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<sup>1</sup> Fritz Bamberger, *Books are the Best Things* (Cincinnati: Society of Jewish Bibliophiles, 1962) 3.

tered the world shortly before Fritz left it, but, his presence has always loomed large. I grew up ever-aware of his heroism, leadership and scholarship; his escape from Nazi Germany with his wife and children and a remarkable library of rare books—among the world’s largest collection of Spinoziana; his studies (alongside a young Franz Kafka) at and leadership of Berlin’s *Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums*; his work as executive director of Esquire magazines; his years as professor of Jewish intellectual history at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and a visiting faculty member at Columbia.

While I found my way to graduate school and to the field of early modern Jewish intellectual and cultural history on my own, it is hard not to see Fritz’s hand directing my choices from above. The concerns that motivate my scholarship are closely related to his: Judaism’s encounter with modernity; the transition from medieval to modern; the figures of Spinoza and Mendelssohn; and of course, the history of Jewish books. In addition to my grandfather, I also dedicate this dissertation to Fritz’s memory and express my gratitude to my uncle Michael for sharing his legacy with me.

During my sophomore year at Princeton, I took a seminar with Susannah Heschel, who was visiting for a semester. In it, I learned that the ideas and individuals that were the focus of many a dinner table conversation in our family—the Prophets, emancipation, Zionism—were legitimate fields of academic study. I wrote a paper for that seminar on the Zionist philosopher Ahad Ha’am and, on my father’s suggestion, sent it to the then President of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Rabbi David Ellenson. Since then, Rabbi Ellenson has been my mentor and my guide. His expansive understanding of rabbinic tradition and his use of interdisciplinary methodologies has been a model to which I aspire. His encouragement led me to



pursue this doctorate at Columbia. This is all the more special because Rabbi Ellenson pursued his rabbinical studies at HUC-JIR and graduate studies at Columbia under Fritz Bamberger's tutelage. This dissertation is therefore also dedicated to David, in gratitude for his wisdom and his friendship.

As a child of Manhattan's Upper West Side, Columbia's storied campus has always had a hold on my imagination. I count myself blessed to have been accepted to Columbia's graduate program in History and to have studied with my advisor and mentor Elisheva Carlebach. I am continuously grateful to Professor Carlebach for her piercing insight, her meticulous eye and her constant support and encouragement especially at the most difficult moments.

My encounter with the academic study of Judaism, as well as historical scholarship, began at Princeton and it was there that I studied with extraordinary teachers who continue to be generous interlocutors: John Gager, Anthony Grafton, Susannah Heschel, Olga Litvak and Peter Schäfer. Professor Grafton advised my first foray into historical research—my undergraduate thesis on Rabbi Joseph H. Hertz—and his capacious grasp of diverse fields, including especially, the history of the book, has left an indelible imprint on my understanding of history and this dissertation, as will be readily evident throughout the text.

At Princeton, I was also lucky to find myself in Olga Litvak's classroom. In the years since, Olga has inspired me with the creativity and erudition of her scholarship, advised me professionally and personally, joined me on maverick culinary explorations, and been the best of friends. Her strenuous recommendation led me to Columbia and her guidance has been invaluable every step of the way in this dissertation.

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declined to fund new Javits fellowships. This is a great national loss and it is my sincere hope that in the future this extraordinary program will be reinstated.

During the last three years, while writing this dissertation, I have also had the distinct honor and pleasure of serving as a rabbi of Washington Hebrew Congregation in Washington, D.C. When I was hired, the clergy and lay leadership of the synagogue expressed sincere interest in my scholarship and regarded it as an asset to my pastoral work. This continues to this day. I am grateful to the congregation's leadership, its Board of Directors and my colleagues, for their support. I also am grateful to our executive director Steve Jacober and long-time educator Gerdy Tractman for their assistance with the intricacies of Yiddish and German translation.

I am grateful to my oldest and dearest friend, Joshua Bengal. An excellent writer and proofreader, Josh read several chapters of this dissertation and provided useful feedback. I only wish I could have followed his wise counsel and abandoned the use of the passive voice completely.

I am grateful to my in-laws, Don and Patsy Glazer, who were with me when I was accepted to graduate school and have cheered me on ever since. I wrote major portions of this dissertation at their kitchen counter and dining room table—and it is much better for it.

My parents Suzanne and Edward Skloot have been the most loving and generous supporters. Throughout my childhood, they nurtured in me a love of learning, reading and writing out of which this dissertation emerged. They have followed the development of it from the very beginning, asking questions that led me to search out new ideas and look deeper into texts. I have loved sharing this process with them, and taking refuge from it in their tranquil Morningside Heights home.

And then there's Maya. The remarkable soul who was merely an idea when work on this dissertation began and became a reality halfway through its completion. Maya—you have often wondered what your daddy has been doing these last months, hacking away at the keyboard, cracking the spines of so many books. It may be hard for you to imagine but your curiosity and the force of your intellect inspires me, not to mention your innate goodness. I hope one day you will read (a little) of this dissertation and forgive me for the fact that it has occasionally prevented me from joining you in all sorts of joyous activities.

Finally, לבבתי אהותי כלה, Erin. So often in the last ten years, you have been my source of strength. You have known this dissertation was possible from the very beginning and reminded me of that fact often, even when I forgot. You have taught me to be fierce in the pursuit of truth and to trust my instincts. You have read more drafts of this dissertation than anyone should reasonably have read, and each time you offered thoughtful, incisive comments. And then, of course, you made it possible for me to do the demanding work required by taking up the slack when necessary, often at a cost to your own enjoyment and pleasure. For all these reasons, this dissertation and the degree it confers, is dedicated to you, with enduring love and gratitude.

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## Notes on the Text

In the following pages, when transliterating Hebrew, I have employed the phonetic scheme used in the recent edition of *Encyclopedia Judaica*.<sup>1</sup> For Hebrew words and names that have become part of standard English, I have used the standard English spelling even if that spelling deviates from the encyclopedia's transliteration scheme—thus “Cohen,” not “Kohen.”

I have attempted to keep the body of this dissertation free of Hebrew text and have translated numerous passages from *Sefer Ḥasidim* into English. In doing so, I have tried to maintain their unique flavor and medieval “otherness.” For specialists, transcriptions of the translated passages may be found in the footnotes directly below each passage.

English biblical quotations are taken from the Jewish Publication Society's 1985 translation (NJPS), unless otherwise specified.<sup>2</sup>

I have regularly used the following abbreviations:

b. *ben*, “son of”

BT Babylonian Talmud

M Mishnah

PT Palestinian Talmud

R. Rabbi

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, eds. *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 2nd ed. (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007)

<sup>2</sup> Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1985).

## Introduction

Early on in *Don Quixote*, there is a memorable scene where the protagonist's friends tear through his library hunting for chivalric romances.<sup>1</sup> They believe reading such books led this man of the lesser Castilian nobility to take leave of his senses and proclaim himself Don Quixote de la Mancha, knight-errant, righter of wrongs, seeker of adventure. It is notable that the majority of the books they discover, and subsequently heave from a window onto a pyre below, were recently printed titles of an ever-expanding and ever-profitable genre.<sup>2</sup> Here is a case where, at least in the mind of Don Quixote's associates, the printed word had a direct and deleterious effect on a reader—and the only remedy appropriate remedy was censorship.<sup>3</sup>

To a certain extent, much existing research on the impact of printing on Hebrew books and Jewish culture reads like Don Quixote's friends' diagnosis—a mere unverifiable supposition about causation. In other words, how does the reading of one kind of literature lead to madness? Or more germane to our topic, what did printing do to Hebrew books? How did printing shape readers' understanding and appreciation of Hebrew books that formerly existed only in manuscript?

This dissertation seeks to answer the latter two questions by identifying in specific terms how the work of printing changed Hebrew texts and influenced readers' understanding of those

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<sup>1</sup> Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, trans. Edith Grossman (Ecco: New York, 2003) 45-52.

<sup>2</sup> On the popularity of chivalric romances in the sixteenth century, see Brian Richardson, *Print Culture in Renaissance Italy: The Editor and the Vernacular Text, 1470-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

<sup>3</sup> On the meaning of this episode and Cervantes' ambivalent attitude to chivalric romance, Stephen C. Jaeger, *Enchantment: On Charisma and the Sublime in the Arts of the West* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012) 204-207.

texts during the sixteenth century. The argument it advances is that the printing of Hebrew books was a creative act rooted in time and place, not merely a process of reproduction and dissemination. The printed Hebrew books of the sixteenth century were designed, manufactured and distributed by a varied cast of characters—printers, editors, proofreaders, typesetters, press workers, shippers and shopkeepers, among others—denizens of early modern print and bookshops.<sup>4</sup> Printers’ commercial, intellectual and religious interests determined what they chose to print and how they printed it—from the modifications and additions they introduced into texts to the prefaces and finding aids they composed alongside. Further, their editorial decisions were shaped by their legal, political and social frameworks. The precariousness of Jewish legal status in early modern Europe, as well as the Roman Catholic Church’s policies of censorship and its ongoing conflict with Protestantism, had a direct influence on the lives of Hebrew printers and their products.

In recent decades, beginning with the pioneering work of Elizabeth Eisenstein, scholars of European culture have sought to historicize the production and dissemination of knowledge in

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<sup>4</sup> On the many parties involved in bringing a work to press and making it available to readers, see, Robert Darnton, “What Is the History of Books?” *Daedalus* 111, no. 3 (Summer 1982): 65–83, reprinted in Robert Darnton, *The Kiss of Lamourette: Reflections in Cultural History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1990) 107–135. See also, Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1985); Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); David McKittrick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order, 1450–1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Andrew Pettegree, *The Book in the Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); Theodor Dunkelgrun, “The Multiplicity of Scripture: the Confluence of Textual Traditions in the Making of the Antwerp Polyglot Bible (1568–1573)” (Ph.D. diss, University of Chicago, 2012).

print and other media.<sup>5</sup> Jewish historians have followed suit, describing the disruptive influence of printed books on norms of Jewish scholarship, communal governance, ritual and spirituality.<sup>6</sup> The sixteenth century looms large in this research because only then, nearly thirty years after the printing of the first Hebrew book, did the Hebrew press come into its own.<sup>7</sup> Bibliographic data

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<sup>5</sup> Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early-Modern Europe*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), as well as her dialogue with Adrian Johns: Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, "An Unacknowledged Revolution Revisited," *The American Historical Review* 107, no. 1 (February 2002): 87–105; Adrian Johns, "How to Acknowledge a Revolution," *The American Historical Review* 107, no. 1 (February 2002): 106–25; Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, "[How to Acknowledge a Revolution]: Reply," *The American Historical Review* 107, no. 1 (February 2002): 126–28. Eisenstein's interest in the social and cultural effects of printing was anticipated by Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *The Coming of the Book: Impact of Printing, 1450-1800*, trans. David Gerard (London: Verso, 2010). Originally published as *L'apparition du livre* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1958). More recent reflections on the production of knowledge through print and other media include, Sabrina Alcorn Baron and Eric N. Lindquist, eds. *Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies After Elizabeth L. Eisenstein*. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007); Pamela Smith and Benjamin Schmidt, eds. *Making Knowledge in Early Modern Europe: Practices, Objects, and Texts, 1400-1800* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

<sup>6</sup> Among others, Jacob Elbaum, *Petihut ve-histagrut: ha-yetsirah ha-ruhanit ha-sifrutit be-Polin u-ve'artzot Ashkenaz be-shilhei ha-me'ah ha-shesh esreh* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1990); Elchanan Reiner, "A Biography of an Agent of Culture: Eliezer Altschul of Prague and His Literary Activity" in *Schöpferische Momente des europäischen Judentums in der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Michael Graetz (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 2000) 229–47; Elchanan Reiner, "Temurot be-yeshivot Polin v'Ashkenaz be-me'ot ha-16-17 ve-ha-viku'ah al ha-pilpul" in *Studies in Jewish Culture in Honor of Chone Shmeruk*, eds. Israel Bartal, Ezra Mendelssohn, and Chava Turniansky (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History, 1993) 9–80; "The Ashkenazi Elite at the Beginning of the Modern Era: Manuscript Versus Printed Book" in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewish History* vol. 10, ed. Gershon David Hundert (London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1997) 85–98; "The Attitude of Ashkenazi Society to the New Science in the Sixteenth Century," *Science in Context* 10, no. 4 (1997) 589–603; Adam Shear, *The Kuzari and the Shaping of Jewish Identity, 1167-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) ch. 5; David B. Ruderman, *Early Modern Jewry: A New Cultural History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 173–180.

<sup>7</sup> The earliest printed Hebrew book that includes a date of publication is an edition of Rashi's commentary on the Pentateuch printed in 1475 by Abraham b. Garton b. Isaac in Reggio di Calabria, see A. M. Habermann, *Ha-sefer ha-ivri be-hitpathuto: me-simanim le-otiyot u-me-megillah le-sefer* (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1968) 75–76. However, undated Hebrew works were printed in Rome and elsewhere prior to that year. On the flourishing of the Hebrew press in the sixteenth century, see Marvin J. Heller, "Introduction" in *The Sixteenth Century Hebrew Book: An Abridged Thesaurus*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), xiii–xvi and Habermann, *History of the Hebrew Book*, 74–143.



make this point clear: Only 140 Hebrew titles were produced prior to the year 1500. Nearly twenty times that number were printed in the sixteenth century.<sup>8</sup>

One way this dissertation differs from much of this recent scholarship is that it avoids larger claims about the effects of printing on Jewish society and culture. Neither is it a reception history: an attempt to assess the way readers understood and interpreted a text and how those interpretations changed over the *longue durée*. Rather, more modestly, it seeks to identify, in specific terms, how the work of printing changed Hebrew texts and thereby shaped the meaning readers derived from them.<sup>9</sup> This groundwork is a necessary preparation for future research on the broader social and cultural impact of Hebrew printing.

This dissertation further differs from recent scholarship in that it is a case study. It traces the effect of printing on the construction, presentation and interpretation of multiple editions of a single text: the first two printed editions of *Sefer Hasidim* (of 1538 and 1581). A close reading and comparison of these editions and their manuscript precursors, including their associated paratexts (such as front matter and annotations), shines light on the creative actions and interventions undertaken by printers.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Controlling for the fact that Hebrew printing began in 1475 and thus incunabular period lasted only for 25 years and not a full century, we can say that five times more Hebrew books were printed in the sixteenth century than the fifteenth. For these figures, see Heller, “Introduction,” xiii; Joseph R. Hacker and Adam Shear, “Introduction” in *The Hebrew Book in Early Modern Italy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011) 2, 198 n.4; and Anat Gueta, “Ha-sefarim ha-mudpasim shel shenot ha-shin ke-makor le-ḥeker ḥaye ha-ru’ah shel ha-ḥevrah ha-yehudit,” (Ph.D. dissertation, Bar Ilan University, 2002). On Hebrew incunabula, i.e. those works printed prior to 1500, see A.K. Offenber, “Hebrew incunabula in public collections” in *A Choice of Corals*, (Nieuwkoop, Netherlands: De Graaf, 1992) 42-58.

<sup>9</sup> In this way, it is similar to Herman Pleij’s efforts in “Novel Knowledge: Innovation in Dutch Literature and Society of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries” in the Hebrew context, see *Making Knowledge in Early Modern Europe*, 117.

<sup>10</sup> The term “paratext” was coined by the literary theorist Gérard Genette in *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). The interpretation of paratexts plays a significant role in this dissertation and the theoretical issues involved are discussed in greater detail later in this introduction.

This dissertation is also a contribution to the historiography of the early modern Hebrew print shop and the ways printed titles bear witness to social interactions there.<sup>11</sup> Until recently, this topic was more often of interest to bibliographers than historians.<sup>12</sup> Adrian Johns has argued, however, that the social context of the print shop had a decisive influence on the production of knowledge in the early modern period. A book's authority and value were closely associated with "the identities, representations, and practices of the people" who produced it.<sup>13</sup> This dissertation builds on Johns's contention by mustering the techniques of textual analysis, cultural history, bibliography and literary theory to show how the "identities, representations, and practices" of *Sefer Hasidim*'s printers shaped the editions they produced.

The argument at the heart of this dissertation charts a middle course between two established understandings of the effect of printing on Hebrew texts. On the one hand, generations of Jewish scholars have viewed printing as a mode of reproduction that led—through printers' neglect and censors' malice—to the corruption of texts. This view goes back to the early modern period itself and to rabbinic depictions of newly-printed books as of dubious accuracy and au-

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<sup>11</sup> Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, *The Censor, the Editor, and the Text: the Catholic Church and the Shaping of the Jewish Canon in the Sixteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007); Jean Baumgarten, *Le peuple des livres: Les ouvrages populaires sans la société Ashkénaze, XVII<sup>e</sup>-XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2010); Adam Shear, *The Kuzari and the Shaping of Jewish Identity, 1167-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

<sup>12</sup> See various volumes by Abraham Ya'ari, including *Mehkerei sefer: perakim be-toldot ha-sefer ha-ivri* (Jerusalem: Mosad HaRav Kook, 1958); Abraham Habermann, including *Toledot ha-sefer ha-ivri* (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1968) and those by Chaim Friedberg, including *Toledot ha-defus ha-ivri b'Italia...* (Tel Aviv: M. A. Bar-Juda, 1956.); David Werner Amram, *The Makers of Hebrew Books in Italy: Being Chapters in the History of the Hebrew Printing Press*, (Philadelphia: Julius H. Greenstone, 1909); and more recently, Marvin J. Heller, *The Sixteenth Century Hebrew Book: An Abridged Thesaurus* (Leiden: Brill, 2004)

<sup>13</sup> Johns, *Nature of the Book*, 42. Johns has argued that Eisenstein failed to pay close enough attention to the internal dynamics of the print shop and therefore failed to notice how printers worked actively to win authority and credibility for their works and the new medium of printing.

thority.<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, recent academic treatments on the topic, such as Zeev Gries's *The Book in the Jewish World*, focus on printing's power to reproduce and disseminate old and new works widely, expanding literacy and spreading knowledge.<sup>15</sup> Gries pays little attention, however, to the specific processes and people that created that knowledge. Printing, he implies, is a value-neutral, mechanical process, rather than a series of subjective, creative decisions situated in a particular social and cultural context.<sup>16</sup>

On the other hand, Daniel Abrams has argued that printing was an entirely creative process, and that well-known works, such as the *Zohar*, did not exist in any recognizable form prior to their being printed. They were assembled nearly out of whole cloth in the print shop; to be a printer was almost akin to being an author.<sup>17</sup> In the case of *Sefer Hasidim*, it's clear that the printers of the first two editions consciously adapted and modified the material they found in exemplars and contextualized that material through surrounding paratexts. Printers did not create *Sefer Hasidim ex nihilo*—it existed in recognizably similar manuscript variations prior to its printing—but the printed editions of *Sefer Hasidim* differed from their manuscript antecedents.

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<sup>14</sup> Chapter five describes a critique of this sort in the second printed edition of *Sefer Hasidim* lodged against the first edition. See also, Reiner, "The Ashkenazi Elite." A classic articulation of this view is that of R. N. N. Rabinovitch, *Ma'amar al hadpasat ha-talmud* (Munich, 1877). Johns demonstrates that this view was widely held among European readers as well, Johns, *Nature of the Book*, 28-40

<sup>15</sup> Zeev Gries, *The Book in the Jewish World: 1700-1900* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2007).

<sup>16</sup> This critique may also be applied to some of the works of Elhanan Reiner, including the aforementioned studies, "The Ashkenazi Elite," where he focuses on print's enabling "the standardization of texts, exposure of the lower classes to literature, and changes in the structure of the traditional library," 93; see also, "A Biography of an Agent of Culture;" "The Rise of an Urban Community: Some Insights on the Transition From the Medieval Ashkenazi to the 16th Century Jewish Community in Poland," *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów* 207 (2003): 363–72.

<sup>17</sup> Daniel Abrams, *Kabbalistic Manuscripts and Textual Theory: Methodologies of Textual Scholarship and Editorial Practice in the Study of Jewish Mysticism* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2010).

The printing of *Sefer Ḥasidim* was an active process of adaptation and contextualization, but printers neither created it out of whole cloth nor merely reproduced pre-existing material.

The existing work that shows the greatest kinship with this dissertation is Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin's *The Censor, the Editor, and the Text*. In it, Raz-Krakotzkin writes about the wide-ranging influence of print shop workers—Jewish, Christian and Christian converts from Judaism—on the texts they produced. He shows that the process of censoring Hebrew texts was contiguous with editorial processes and that print shop workers undertook their tasks collaboratively. He concludes that the involvement of Christians and converts in the printing and censoring of Hebrew books “established a separated Jewish space and...confirmed the right of Jews to preserve their literature and their Law,” presaging the “secularization” and “modernization” of Jewish society.<sup>18</sup>

Raz-Krakotzkin is certainly correct that censorship was one facet of the editing and preparation of texts for print, as this dissertation will bear out. However, in focusing on censors' removal of anti-Christian elements from Hebrew texts, Raz-Krakotzkin pays inadequate attention to other facets of editing and printing—the emendation of texts for clarity, the production of finding aids, for example—which had an equal if not greater influence on readers.

Second, Raz-Krakotzkin does not sufficiently consider instances where Jewish printers—prior to the burning of the Talmud in 1553 by the Roman Catholic Church in Italy and the institutionalization of surveillance and censorship of Hebrew books thereafter—censored the texts they produced. How did censorship undertaken by Jews prior to 1553 differ from censorship after it was imposed by Christian authorities later in the sixteenth century?

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<sup>18</sup> Raz-Krakotzkin, *The Censor, the Editor, and the Text*, 3, 84, 181-194.

Third, it is not clear that the removal of anti-Christian elements in the text of *Sefer Ḥasidim* should be equated with “modernization.” On the one hand, in both printed editions, censorship was often haphazard; some objectionable elements were removed while others remained. On the other hand, many of the printers’ replacements for offending words and phrases allowed readers to intuit the text’s original meaning. This censorship was thus more often than not, as Piet van Boxel has written, the “mechanical” removal of “inadmissible vocabulary” and not, as Raz-Krakotzkin has claimed, the collaborative creation of “new knowledge” by Jews and Christians.<sup>19</sup>

### **Sefer Ḥasidim**

*Sefer Ḥasidim*, in its first two printed editions, is an ideal subject for a case study in the history of Hebrew printing. It is thought to have been composed in late-twelfth and early-thirteenth century Franco-Germany (Ashkenaz), and has been attributed to R. Judah he-Ḥasid (Judah the Pious).<sup>20</sup> The extensive literary and historical literature on *Sefer Ḥasidim* focuses mainly on its medieval origins, literary structure and ideology. Much of this scholarship depicts it as the prime witness to the ideas and practices of the *Ḥasidei Ashkenaz* (the “pietists of Franco-Ger-

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<sup>19</sup> Piet van Boxel, “Hebrew Books and Censorship in Sixteenth Century Italy” in *Jewish Books and Their Readers: Aspects of the Intellectual Life of Christians and Jews in Early Modern Europe* (Lieden: Brill, 2016) 85, 97.

<sup>20</sup> Haym Soloveitchik, “Le-ta’arikh ḥibburo shel Sefer Ḥasidim” in *Culture and Society in Medieval Jewish History: A Collection of Essays in Memory of Hayim Hillel Ben-Sasson*, eds. Robert Bonfil, Menachem Ben-Sasson, and Joseph Hacker (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History, 1989) 383–88. The attribution to R. Judah is discussed in greater detail in chapter two.

many”), a religious group led by Judah, and to medieval Franco-German Jewish life more generally.<sup>21</sup>

Interestingly, however, it is not clear that either *Sefer Ḥasidim* or the traditions of the *Ḥasidei Ashkenaz* were widely known prior to the printing of the first edition in 1538, or even in their own day. As Joseph Dan has noted, the number of Ashkenazi *ḥasidim* at any one time during the medieval period was very limited, and their distinctive ritual, ethical and theological concepts were known only to an intimate circle of scholars.<sup>22</sup> Haym Soloveichik has gone further, arguing that the distinctive ideas of *Sefer Ḥasidim* had next-to-no influence on subsequent generations of Jewish scholars.<sup>23</sup> Similarly, while some medieval texts make reference to Judah’s practices and exploits or quote material found in *Sefer Ḥasidim*, I have not found explicit references to a book entitled *Sefer Ḥasidim* or references linking Judah to the authorship of such a work in

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<sup>21</sup> A sampling of the classic studies on *Sefer Ḥasidim* includes, Y. N. Simhoni, “Ha-ḥasidut ha-ashkenazit be-yemei ha-beinayim,” *Hatsefirah* (1917) 12–32 reprinted in Ivan G. Marcus, *Dat v’hevrah bamishnatam shel Ḥasidei Ashkenaz* (Jerusalem: Mercaz Shazar, 1999) 47–80; Jacob Freimann, “Introduction” in *Sefer Ḥasidim: Al pi nusah ketav ha-yad be-Parma*, ed. Jehuda Wistinetzki (Frankfurt: Vahrmann, 1924); Yitzhak Baer, “Ha-megamah ha-dadit-ha-ḥevrutit shel ‘Sefer Ḥasidim’”, *Zion* 3 (1938): 1–50; Gershom Sholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken, 1946) 80–118; Haym Soloveitchik, “Three Themes in the *Sefer Ḥasidim*,” *AJS Review* 1 (1976): 311–57; Ivan G. Marcus, *Piety and Society: The Jewish Pietists of Medieval Germany* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981); Joseph Dan, *Ḥasidut Ashkenaz be-toledot ha-maḥshavah ha-Yehudit* (Tel Aviv: Open University of Israel, 1990); Tamar Alexander-Frizer, *The Pious Sinner: Ethics and Aesthetics in the Medieval Hasidic Narrative* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991); Ephraim Kanarfogel, *Jewish Education and Society in the High Middle Ages* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992); Elisheva Baumgarten, *Practicing Piety in Medieval Ashkenaz: Men, Women, and Everyday Religious Observance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014); David I. Shyovitz, “Christians and Jews in the Twelfth-Century Werewolf Renaissance,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 75, no. 4 (October 2014): 521–43; David I. Shyovitz, “‘He Has Created a Remembrance of His Wonders:’ Nature and Embodiment in the Thought of the *Ḥasidei Ashkenaz*” (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2011).

<sup>22</sup> Joseph Dan, “Ashkenazi Hasidim, 1941–1991: Was There Really a Hasidic Movement in Medieval Germany?” in *Gershom Scholem’s Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism Years After: Proceedings of the Sixth International Conference on the History of Jewish Mysticism*, eds. Peter Schäfer and Joseph Dan (Tübingen: Mohr, 1992) 94–101.

<sup>23</sup> Haym Soloveitchik, “Piety, Pietism and German Pietism: *Sefer Ḥasidim* I and the Influence of *Ḥasidei Ashkenaz*,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 92, no. 3 (2002): 455–93.

medieval Jewish literature.<sup>24</sup> As Edward Fram has shown, *Sefer Ḥasidim* began to influence Ashkenazic Jewish culture only after it was printed and began to circulate in Poland in the sixteenth century.<sup>25</sup>

Beyond Fram, few scholars have delved into *Sefer Ḥasidim*'s "afterlife" in the early modern period, including its transformation from a manuscript into a printed text.<sup>26</sup> This is, of course, the focus of this dissertation. The fact that the extant manuscripts of *Sefer Ḥasidim* have been catalogued and transcribed by Peter Schäfer and his team at the Princeton University Sefer Ḥasidim Project (PUSHP) also facilitates the comparative, close-textual analysis at the heart of this dissertation.<sup>27</sup>

*Sefer Ḥasidim*'s appearance in two editions, one shortly after the other, begs the question why printers decided to invest the significant capital and energy to print it. A core question of this dissertation concerns the two editions' intended readerships, that is, who did printers hope would purchase these editions and how did printers market them to potential readers?

Another reason *Sefer Ḥasidim* makes an excellent subject for a study in the history Hebrew printing is that its first two editions were produced in dramatically different political and social contexts. The first edition was produced by a short-lived Hebrew press founded by small

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<sup>24</sup> Soloveitchik summarizes his search for references to Ashkenazi hasidic ideas in medieval Jewish literature in "Piety, Pietism and German Pietism," 466-480. Soloveitchik, here, in part, is responding to Eric Zimmer, who in *Olam ke-minhago noheg: perakim be-toldot ha-minhagim, hilkhotehem ve-gilgulehem* (Jerusalem: Merkaz Zalman Shazar, 1996) argued that the *Ḥasidei Ashkenaz* had a decisive influence on the development of Austrian and Polish Jewish custom. Soloveitchik rejects this, "Piety, Pietism and German Pietism," 484-488. On the ascription of authorship to *Sefer Ḥasidim*, see chapter 3.

<sup>25</sup> Edward Fram, "German Pietism and Sixteenth- and Early Seventeenth-Century Polish Rabbinic Culture," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 96, no. 1 (Winter 2006): 50-59.

<sup>26</sup> Another exception is Jay R. Berkovitz, "Crisis and Authority in Early Modern Ashkenaz" *Jewish History* 26, no. 1 (May 2012): 179-99.

<sup>27</sup> "Princeton University *Sefer Ḥasidim* Project Database," Trustees of Princeton University, accessed January 6, 2017, [https://etc.princeton.edu/sefer\\_hasidim/index.php](https://etc.princeton.edu/sefer_hasidim/index.php).

group of Jewish entrepreneurs in the city of Bologna—a city with a venerable Jewish community in the heart of the Papal States—in 1538. The second edition was produced some forty years later by one of Europe’s venerable Christian printing houses in Basel—a Protestant city where Jews could not reside for nearly two centuries. Additionally, the sixteenth century was marked by dramatic events in European and Jewish history: the turmoil of the Protestant Reformation, the condemnation and burning of Hebrew books in Italy, the popularization of *kabbalah*. One of the aims of this dissertation is to determine the extent to which these events and others left their mark on these editions.

### ***Sefer Ḥasidim* before Printing**

The scholars of the Princeton University *Sefer Ḥasidim* Project (PUSHP) have identified and catalogued eighteen manuscripts, each representing a variant tradition of *Sefer Ḥasidim*.<sup>28</sup> The titles of these manuscripts differ: Some are entitled *Sefer HaHasidim* (Book of the Pious, including the direct article *hey*), *Sefer Yera'im Ḥasidim* (The Book of the God-fearing Pious), *Sefer Ḥasidut* (Book of Piety), and sometimes simply, as we know it, *Sefer Ḥasidim* (without the article). The longest manuscript is the Parma manuscript (H 3280), which includes over 1900 pericopes, and which, since its publication in 1891, has been thought of as the most complete, if not the oldest, variant.<sup>29</sup> In their analysis of the manuscripts, the scholars of the PUSHP have dis-

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<sup>28</sup> I am deeply grateful to Professor Schäfer, the director of PUSHP, Michael Meerson, the associate director, and their team, for their work and for their making the fruits of their research available publicly online.

<sup>29</sup> *Sefer Ḥasidim: al pi nusah ketav hayad be'Parma*, ed. Jehuda Wistinetzki (Berlin: Tzvi Hirsch ben Rabbi Isaac Itzkovitzki, 1891) and the second edition, *Sefer Ḥasidim: Al pi nusah ketav ha-yad be-Parma*, eds. Jehuda Wistinetzki and Jacob Freimann (Frankfurt: Vahrmann, 1924), as well as a more recent facsimile edition of the manuscript, Ivan Marcus, *Sefer ha-Hasidim, ketav yad Parmah H 3280* (Jerusalem: Merkaz Dinur, 1985). Freimann argued that it represented the earliest and most authentic recension of the *Sefer Ḥasidim*. Marcus has challenged this claim, Ivan G. Marcus, “The Recensions and Structure of ‘Sefer Ḥasidim’,” *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 45 (1978): 131–53.



cerned three distinct traditions of *Sefer Ḥasidim*: One group of manuscripts whose texts are generally similar to the Parma manuscript; one group whose texts are generally similar to the first printed edition, that of Bologna; and one group whose texts share content with both the Parma manuscript and the first printed edition—what they call the “mixed group.”<sup>30</sup> Despite these commonalities, they conclude that the diversity of the manuscripts indicates that “*Sefer Ḥasidim* was not handed down to us as a uniform treatise whose copies have identical structure and wording.”<sup>31</sup>

At the same time, beginning with the pioneering work of Jacob Reifmann in the nineteenth century, scholars have recognized that even the first printed edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* is a composite text, drawing on many known and unknown sources.<sup>32</sup> Based on its content, Reifmann divided the text into three separate books. More recently, Ivan Marcus and Haym Soloveichik have suggested other divisions.<sup>33</sup> Needless to say, the composite nature of the text is clearly visi-

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<sup>30</sup> The Princeton classification scheme is helpful for discerning the presence of parallels across the manuscripts but it gives the mistaken impression that parallels do not exist among manuscripts in different groups. For instance, the *Sefer Ḥasidim* Project has asserted that the three *Sefer Ḥasidim*-related passages Bodleian Library manuscript Oppenheimer 487 correspond directly to three sequential passages in the Parma manuscript—and thus they classify this manuscript in the “Parma group.” They do not acknowledge, however, that a very similar version of these three passages appears sequentially in the partners’ edition as well. In fact, given the late dating of this manuscript (Rhineland, 1677), it may be just as likely that these passages were copied from the partners’ edition rather than the Parma manuscript. In particular, the Princeton classification scheme obscures the complex relationship of the partners’ edition of the *Sefer Ḥasidim* to the Parma manuscript, uncovered by Marcus.

<sup>31</sup> The Parma group includes: MS JTS (former) Boesky 45, MS UB Freiburg 483, MS Bodl. Lib. Opp. 614, MS Bodl. Lib. Or. 146, MS Bodl. Lib. Opp. 487, MS ZB Zurich D 74. The Bologna group includes: MS Ambrosiana X 111, MS, Bodl. Lib. Opp. 340, MS Bodl. Lib. Mich. 155, MS Moscow 103, MS Nimes Bibl. mun. Séguier 26. The “mixed” group includes MS JTS 2499, MS Vatican 285, MS Cambridge Add 379, MS Bodl. Lib. Opp. Add. 34, MS Frankfurt Ms. hebr. oct. 94, MS ZB Zurich Heid. 51. For more on this categorization, see “Princeton University *Sefer Ḥasidim* Database (PUSHD): Recensions of *Sefer Ḥasidim*,” accessed November 15, 2016, [https://etc.princeton.edu/sefer\\_hasidim/index.php?a=about](https://etc.princeton.edu/sefer_hasidim/index.php?a=about).

<sup>32</sup> Jacob Reifmann, *Arba’ah harashim* (Prague, 1860) 6-23.

<sup>33</sup> Marcus, *Piety and Society*; Ivan G. Marcus, “The Recensions and Structure of ‘*Sefer Ḥasidim*,’” *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 45 (1978): 131–53; Haym Soloveichik, “Piety, Pietism and German Pietism: *Sefer Ḥasidim* I And the Influence of Ḥasidei Ashkenaz,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 92, no. 3 (2002): 455–93.

ble to even the most uncritical reader. Case in point, the heading, “This is copied from a different *Sefer Ḥasidim*,” introduces the last several pericopes in both the first and second printed editions.<sup>34</sup> Other major sections are excerpts from notable rabbinic works, such as Maimonides’ *Mishneh Torah* and R. Nissim b. Jacob of Kairouan’s *Megillat Setarim*.<sup>35</sup> Despite the longstanding attribution of the work to Judah, *Sefer Ḥasidim* as a whole was not produced by a single author, at a single moment in time.<sup>36</sup> One theme that this dissertation explores is how the printers of the first edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* worked to impose that attribution on the text and instill it in the minds of readers.

### **Texts and Paratexts**

*Sefer Ḥasidim*’s printers shaped both the texts and the paratexts contained in the printed editions they produced. The paratexts deserve special mention because in them *Sefer Ḥasidim*’s printers had their most conspicuous influence. The interpretation of these documents is one of the major foci of this dissertation.

The term “paratext” was coined by the literary theorist Gérard Genette to describe a “certain number of verbal or other productions” that “surround” a text “and extend it, precisely in order to present it...to ensure the text’s presence in the world, its ‘reception’ and consumption in

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<sup>34</sup> זה הועתק מספר חסידים אחר

See §1136 of the Bologna edition and §1129 of the Basel edition.

<sup>35</sup> For the Maimonides passages, see §19-21 in the Bologna edition; for those of Nissim, see §604-606 in the Bologna edition.

<sup>36</sup> Here, I side with Ivan Marcus and Haym Soloveitchik whose work has demonstrated the composite nature of the text, over and against Joseph Dan who has argued that Judah wrote the whole work, Joseph Dan, “Ashkenazi Ḥasidim, 1941-1991,” 96.

the form...of a book.”<sup>37</sup> Genette identifies many types of paratexts, from titles to title pages, from tables of contents to prefaces. All of these documents, Genette explains, constitute “a privileged place of a pragmatics and a strategy, of an influence on the public, an influence that...is at the service of a better reception of the text and a more pertinent reading of it.”<sup>38</sup> Paratexts are thus an author’s attempt to situate a text in a given context, to shape and color readers’ understanding and appreciation of his/her creation.

Genette’s focus on authors is significant. He contends that paratexts are an expression of an author’s intentions; they “ensure for the text a destiny consistent with the author’s purpose.” He draws his conclusions from modern literature, however, and has little interest in the conventions of premodern texts like *Sefer Ḥasidim*, printed for the first time long after their composition.<sup>39</sup> Yet, Genette’s conclusions may be adapted to serve our purposes. Indeed, the paratexts that accompanied printed editions of premodern works are best understood not as an expression of their author’s intentions, but rather of printers’ and editors’ intentions, their desire to promote their preferred reading or readings of a text at the expense of others.

While Genette places great weight on the role authors play in shaping their compositions’ receptions through paratexts, he is also aware that readers are not “docile,” that they may reject or emend the presentation of a text offered in paratexts. Yet, he also notes, a reader, when confronted with a paratext, must assimilate its point of view if only to reject it in the end. In his words, “Knowing it, he cannot completely disregard it, if he wants to contradict it, he must first

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<sup>37</sup> Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 1, emphasis original.

<sup>38</sup> Genette, *Paratexts*, 2.

<sup>39</sup> Genette, *Paratexts*, 407.

assimilate it.”<sup>40</sup> Indeed, a different sort of study, a reception history, would better determine how readers *interpreted Sefer Ḥasidim*. The purpose of this study is to focus, rather, on how *Sefer Ḥasidim*’s printers hoped to condition that reception. Following Genette, in order to come to their own conclusions about *Sefer Ḥasidim*, readers of the first two printed editions had to contend with their paratexts. Thus, one goal of this dissertation is to investigate exactly how *Sefer Ḥasidim*’s printers conditioned readers’ reception and, in Genette’s terms, describe the “*illocutionary force*” of their paratexts.<sup>41</sup>

From a historical perspective—one Genette does not supply—paratexts began to proliferate in books during the sixteenth century.<sup>42</sup> While these documents were fairly scarce in incunabula (books printed prior to 1500)—generally limited to an enlarged first letter or a colophon—sixteenth-century editors and correctors padded their publications with introductions, glossaries, dedications, commentaries, finding aids, charts and illustrations. As Anthony Grafton has emphasized, sixteenth-century editors “enjoyed displaying their ability to create new aids for readers” and they touted the usefulness of these materials on title pages.<sup>43</sup> Paratexts thus served a promotional function, distinguishing editions from one another, and, in the case of title pages and dedications, created a venue for the printer to appeal directly to potential readers and testify to his work’s superiority. This was as much the case in Hebrew books as it was for books in other lan-

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<sup>40</sup> Genette, *Paratexts*, 3 and 407. On the readers’ resistance to paratexts, see Philippe Carrard, “Review: Gérard Genette. *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*....” *Style* 32, no. 2 (June 1998): 365–68.

<sup>41</sup> Genette, *Paratexts*, 10, emphasis original.

<sup>42</sup> Brian Richardson, *Print Culture in Renaissance Italy: The Editor and the Vernacular Text, 1470-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 1, 182-3.

<sup>43</sup> Anthony Grafton, *The Culture of Correction in Renaissance Europe* (London: British Library, 2011) 26.

guages, as will be clear from the comparison of the title pages of the first and second editions of *Sefer Ḥasidim* in chapter four.<sup>44</sup>

### **Structure and Organization of this Dissertation**

The investigations that follow are divided into two parts pertaining to the first and second editions of *Sefer Ḥasidim*, respectively.

Part one contains two chapters: Chapter one examines the historical background of the first edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* and its creators—a small group of Jews known as “the partners”—and their social position within Bolognese Jewry, as well as the legal and institutional framework that regulated the production of Hebrew books in Bologna. Chapter two is a close reading of the partners’ edition in comparison to the extant *Sefer Ḥasidim* manuscripts. This chapter highlights the three areas where the partners innovated: They ascribed the authorship of *Sefer Ḥasidim* to R. Judah he-Ḥasid; they prefaced the text of *Sefer Ḥasidim* with a lengthy table of contents; and they censored the text and eliminated a number of references to Christianity and Christians.

Part two focuses on the second edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim*. It contains three chapters. Chapter three introduces Ambrosius Froben of Basel, the printer of the second edition, and explores that edition’s social and institutional context. Chapter four focuses on the many paratexts that accompanied the second edition: the title page, two introductions and a table of contents. These documents present *Sefer Ḥasidim* as a canonical work of *aggadah* (rabbinic lore). Chapter five

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<sup>44</sup> See *Jewish Encyclopedia*, s.v. “Title-Page” by Joseph Jacobs and Judah David Eisenstein, which notes that formal title pages begin to appear in Hebrew printed titles beginning in the mid 1510s. My own unscientific survey of the digitized printed Hebrew books in the National Library of Israel collection confirms this claim. However, Marvin Heller has noted that a small number in incunabula contain decorated first pages, see Marvin J. Heller, “Behold You are Beautiful My Love: The Use of Ornamental Frames in Hebrew Incunabula” in *Further Studies in the Making of the Early Hebrew Book* (Leiden: Brill, 2013) 3-34.

focuses on the text of *Sefer Ḥasidim* in the second edition and the emendations Froben and his editors introduced. Here, three kinds of emendations are highlighted: the censorship of perceived anti-Christian passages; the removal of phrases in languages other than Hebrew; and the introduction of punctuation and glosses. Taken together, these emendations create the impression that *Sefer Ḥasidim* was a venerable work of far greater import than it was at the time of its composition.

A concluding essay follows these chapters reflecting on the nature of the censorship undertaken in these editions, as well as the place of censorship in the history of sixteenth century Hebrew books. Further, the conclusion considers how the printing of *Sefer Ḥasidim* was part and parcel of the well-attested early modern phenomenon of the “classical revival” and the embeddedness of Jews in European culture.

**Part 1**

**The Partners of Bologna  
and the *Editio Princeps* of *Sefer Ḥasidim***

## Chapter 1

### The Partners of Bologna

*Sefer Ḥasidim* was printed for the first time in 1538 (Hebrew year, 5298) by a group known as “the partners, makers of silk-work”—or more simply, “the partners”—in the city of Bologna.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this chapter and the next is to explore the history of this edition within its social and cultural context. This chapter begins by identifying the partners and others who may have assisted them, and situates their efforts historically within early modern Bologna, the Jewish community and the silk trade there. It then explains why the partners chose to print *Sefer Ḥasidim* and whom they hoped would purchase it.

The next chapter, chapter two, is based on a comparative analysis of the partners’ edition and the extant *Sefer Ḥasidim* manuscripts. The results of this analysis indicate that the partners (and/or the editors and press-workers they hired) made editorial decisions that led to an edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* that departed substantively from its manuscript antecedents.<sup>2</sup> These changes occurred primarily in three editorial realms: (1) formally ascribing authorship to the book; (2) constructing a detailed table of contents; and (3) censoring the text so that passages no longer made direct references to Christians or Christianity. The decisions in these three realms, taken

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<sup>1</sup> On the title page of *Sefer Ḥasidim*, they referred to themselves simply as “the partners” (השותפים). On the title page to *Sefer Or Ammim* (1536-1537), they called themselves: “The insignificant, the partners, may they succeed and live, one and the same, makers of silk-work.”

On the title page to *Sefer Torah Or* (1537-1538), they called themselves, “the partners, may they succeed and live, makers of silk-work.”

השותפים יצ"ו עושי מלאכת המשי

<sup>2</sup> The question of who is ultimately responsible for the editorial decisions that led to the printed work is discussed in greater detail in chapter two.



together, along with what is known about the partners' printing enterprise, demonstrate that the first printing of *Sefer Hasidim* was not merely the duplication and popularization of a medieval manuscript, but rather a creative act reflective of print shop, literary, and Jewish culture in early modern Italy.

### Hebrew Printing in Bologna

Over the last three decades, historians of the book have focused their attentions on the relationships and interactions that shaped book production during the first centuries of printing. As Robert Darnton has argued, the production and distribution of printed texts can be understood as a “communications circuit” that engaged a “complex world of middlemen”—from publishers and press workers to shippers and salesmen—who shepherded a text from manuscript to market.<sup>3</sup> It is frequently difficult to identify the individuals involved in this process—their names were often not recorded in publications.<sup>4</sup> With regard to the first edition of *Sefer Hasidim*, we can identify at least some of the people who produced it with specificity.

While they consistently referred to themselves opaquely as “the partners, makers of silk-work” or “the partners,” we have a record of the names of the men responsible for the printing of

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Darnton, “What Is the History of Books?” *Daedalus* 111, no. 3 (Summer 1982): 65–83, 67. See also Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998) 59–186; Andrew Pettegree, *The Book in the Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010) 21–106.

<sup>4</sup> In the partners' publications, they were sometimes called, “craftsmen” (אומנים). See, for example, the colophon to the partners edition of the Responsa of R. Solomon ibn Adret (1538–1539, 5299), they blame the craftsman for allowing errors into the volume:

גם נמצאו בהעתק אי זה תשובות מפוזרות אחת הנה ואחת הנה ונתנו מרועים אחרים ואסיקו שמייהו על שם הר"שבא ורבות מהן נשטטו ולא נדפסו אך נשארו מהן בהכרח כי לפעמים כשכבר חלקו אומני הדפוס חלוקת העמודים בטרם ינתן הקונטרסים למגיה וקראה [כך] יעשו במלאכתם אם יסירום והמבין המלאכה ידע את זה.

For an excellent description of the parties who shaped the production of early modern printed books, see Johns, *Nature of the Book*, 75–108. On the difficulty of identifying the parties involved in the production of a particular book, see Brian Richardson, *Printing, Writers and Readers in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 33.

*Sefer Hasidim* in 1538. That record is the introduction to a two-volume *maḥzor* (holiday prayer book) with a commentary by R. Yohanan b. Joseph Treves (aka Trabot) entitled *Kamḥa D'Avshuna* (lit. “flour ground from dried grain”), which the partners printed in 1540.<sup>5</sup> In his introduction to this commentary, R. Yohanan singles out the partners by name: R. Menachem b. R. Abraham of Modena, R. Yehiel of Verona b. R. Solomon and R. Don Aryeh b. R. Solomon Hayyim of Monselice—all of Bologna.<sup>6</sup> These three men were responsible for establishing the printing house, funding and overseeing its operation. In Treves’s words, they “spent their money...and acted with vigor in their labor, the holy labor of their presses.”<sup>7</sup> The daily activity of the press was carried out by R. Raphael Talmi b. R. Emanuel of Forli, whom Treves calls, a “wise craftsman” hired “to carry out the work.”<sup>8</sup>

The specific rabbinical titles that Treves ascribes to the partners and to Talmi are significant: All four had received a kind of rabbinical ordination that testified to their expertise in Tal-

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<sup>5</sup> Throughout the introduction and in the colophon to the book, the author of *Kimḥa de-Avishuna* emphasizes his wish to remain anonymous. This is in keeping with the view expressed in *Sefer Hasidim* that authors should imitate the sages of old who concealed their identities, *Sefer Hasidim*, §367. However, according to Alexander Marx, the publishers of a subsequent edition of the *maḥzor* identified Treves as the author of the commentary when they reissued it in 1550, Alexander Marx, “R. Joseph of Arles and Rabbi Yochanan Treves” in *Studies in Memory of Moses Schorr*, eds. Louis Ginzburg and Abraham Weiss (New York: Professor Moses Schorr Memorial Committee, 1944) 194. On the phrase “*Kamḥa D'Avshuna*” see Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim...*, s.v. “אבישונא, אבשונא;” and BT Meg. 7b.

<sup>6</sup> The Hebrew expression “may his memory be life eternal” was appended to R. Yehiel’s given name, implying that by the time Treves wrote his introduction, he had died. R. Yehiel’s death may have delayed the publication of the *maḥzor*, which was printed over a year after the rest of the partners’ publications, the last of which was printed in the year 1539.

<sup>7</sup> פזרו מעותיהם אלה עשו עתקו גם גברו חיל במלאכתם מלאכת שמים בדפוסיהם.  
Yohanan Treves, *Maḥzor ke-fi minhag kehilat kodesh Roma [Maḥzor kamḥa d'avshuna]* (Bologna, 1540) introduction.

<sup>8</sup> וחרש חכם בקשו להם במלאכת הדפוס... להיות על המלאכה להעשות אותה והדפיסו כמה ספרים.  
Treves, *Maḥzor*, introduction.

mudic learning and to their license to render halakhic decisions.<sup>9</sup> They were not, then, merely entrepreneurial lay people and craftsmen eager to profit from a new commodity. Rather, they were businessmen and scholars well-versed in the Jewish textual tradition. As such, it is reasonable to assume that the partners were involved in the editorial side of producing their books. This was not unusual in the sixteenth century. As Brian Richardson has observed, “The Renaissance book industry in general is characterized by fluidity and a lack of rigid specialization, so that the same person could be both a bookseller and a printer, a printer might work on commission for publishers but might also finance his own editions.”<sup>10</sup> Hebrew print shop owners, perhaps most famously, Daniel Bomberg, were known to be intimately involved in the editorial aspects of printing.<sup>11</sup>

Documents from the Vatican Archives collected by Shlomo Simonsohn and Filippo Tamburini shed additional light on one of the partners in the printing venture: Beginning in 1536, R. Menachem b. R. Abraham of Modena—known in the Vatican documents as Emanuel or Emanuel Abraham—sought papal permission to print and sell Hebrew books in Bologna.<sup>12</sup> He also sought

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<sup>9</sup> As signified by their use of the title, *moreinu*, in addition to *harav*. The various rabbinic titles as used during this period, and the distinctions between them, are nuanced and difficult to render in English. For simplicity’s sake, I’ve chosen to identify all individuals who received rabbinic ordination as “rabbi” (or the abbreviation R.). On rabbinic titles and honorifics, as well as the question of ordination, see Robert Bonfil, *Rabbis and Jewish Communities in Renaissance Italy*, trans. Jonathan Chipman (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1990), 35-99.

<sup>10</sup> Richardson, *Printing, Writers and Readers*, 33.

<sup>11</sup> Bruce Nielsen, “Daniel Van Bombergen, a Bookman of Two Worlds” in *The Hebrew Book in Early Modern Italy*, ed. Joseph R. Hacker and Adam Shear (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011) 56–75; Avraham Rosenthal, “Daniel Bomberg and His Talmud Editions,” in *Gli Ebrei e Venezia: Secoli XIV-XVIII*, ed. Gaetano Cozzi (Milan: Edizioni Comunità, 2012) 375–416; A. M. Habermann, *Ha-madpis Daniel Bombergi ve-reshimat sifrei beit defuso* (Safed: Museum of Printing Art, 1978); Aron Freiman, “Daniel Bomberg und seine hebräische Druckerei in Venedig,” *Zeitschrift für Hebraeische Bibliographie* 10 (1909): 32–36.

<sup>12</sup> There are six documents in all, two are collected in Shlomo Simonsohn, ed. *The Apostolic See and the Jews: Documents: 1522-1538* (Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1990) §1812 and §1821, and four, more recently, are collected in Filippo Tamburini, *Ebrei, saraceni, cristiani: vita sociale e vita religiosa dai registri della Penitenzieria Apostolica (secoli XIV-XVI)* (Milan: Istituto di Propaganda Libreria, 1996) 108-117. Emanuel is a commonly used alias for Menachem, see Simonsohn, *Apostolic See and the Jews*, note to §1812.

a papal copyright to prevent anyone else from printing the same books for ten years. The documents indicate that Menachem succeeded in convincing the Pope Paul III to issue these licenses because he engaged the support of powerful officials in the pope's inner circle: Nicholas of Aragon, the dean of the *Rota* (the Church's highest appellate court), and Pierluigi Farnese, the pope's son, Duke of Parma and Piacenza.<sup>13</sup>

The colophon to a *siddur* (prayer book) that the partners published in 1536-1537 gives us additional information about Talmi's role in the partnership: There, Talmi's name appears without rabbinic titles; he is called simply, "the engraver, the insignificant, Raphael Talmi."<sup>14</sup> The fact that Talmi was identified as "the engraver" here, and in the *maḥzor*, a "wise craftsman" likely led the bibliographer Chaim Friedberg to conclude that Talmi was responsible for casting the Hebrew type that the partners used in their shop.<sup>15</sup> This may be correct, but the colophon also states that the *siddur* was produced "in the name of the partners...and in his [Talmi's] own name," indicating that Talmi had a greater role in the project, and perhaps helped finance it, along with the partners.<sup>16</sup>

Partnerships of this sort—several individuals pooling capital to underwrite the printing of a book—were especially common during the first century of Hebrew print. Hebrew printers

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<sup>13</sup> Tamburini, *Ebrei, saraceni, cristiani*, 112.

<sup>14</sup> In Hebrew, the crucial phrases are:

ע"י המחוקק הצעיר רפאל תלמי יצו' בשם השותפים יצו'.

The appellation "the insignificant" is often self-deprecating, indicating that Talmi was the author and voice of this colophon. This lends weight to the assertion that Talmi was an investor in the book's publication.

<sup>15</sup> Friedberg does not offer evidence for his assertion that the partners "ordered R. Raphael Talmi b. Emanuel to engrave the square letters and RaShi [script] of different types," see Chiam B. Friedberg, *Toldot ha-defus ha-ivri be-Italia* (Tel Aviv: M. A. Bar-Juda, 1956) 29. The reference to "RaShi [script]" refers to the semi-cursive typeface associated with printings of the commentaries of the eleventh century R. Solomon b. Isaac (Rashi) of Troyes.

<sup>16</sup> The fact that the text identifies Talmi with the self-deprecating title "the insignificant" also indicates that Talmi wrote this colophon as well, indicating he played a larger role in preparing this title than simply casting the type.

faced the same basic difficulties as all sixteenth century printers, namely, they required enough capital to make significant initial investments in raw materials (paper, type) and labor, and then had to be content with profits realized many months or years later, when books were sold at market.<sup>17</sup> Hebrew printers faced an additional complication: The market for Hebrew books was more limited and geographically dispersed than the market for titles in other languages. According to Shifra Baruchson-Arbib, Hebrew printers relied on “combinations” of funding methods to overcome these difficulties: They drew on personal wealth; they leased their presses out to others; they secured outside investors for particular projects; and they sold subscriptions to readers.<sup>18</sup>

### **R. Abraham b. Moses ha-Cohen**

*Sefer Hasidim* was also printed with the assistance of R. Abraham b. Moses ha-Cohen.<sup>19</sup> Originally from the city of Cuenca in Castile, Abraham fled Spain in 1492 and ultimately established himself as one of the leading rabbis of Bologna and northern Italy.<sup>20</sup> He wrote both the

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<sup>17</sup> On financing the publication of a book in Renaissance Italy see, Richardson, *Printing, Writers and Readers*, 25-35.

<sup>18</sup> Ziporah (Shifra) Baruchson, “Money and Culture: Financing Sources and Methods in Hebrew Printing Shops in Cinquecento Italy,” *La Bibliofilia* 92 (1990): 24, 33.

<sup>19</sup> David Werner Amram, *The Makers of Hebrew Books in Italy: Being Chapters in the History of the Hebrew Printing Press* (Philadelphia: Julius H. Greenstone, 1909) 234. Isaiah Sonne called Abraham a “partner” in the firm, Isaiah Sonne, “L’toldot kehilat Bologna b’tehilat ha’meah ha’ 16,” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 16 (1941): 49. It’s difficult to gauge whether or not this assertion is correct. The fact that Abraham, and not the partners themselves, wrote the introduction and colophon is suggestive of this conclusion but is not definitive.

<sup>20</sup> According to Marx and Sonne, Abraham served as the “rabbi of Bologna” for 15 years, Alexander Marx, “A Jewish Cause Celebre in Sixteenth Century Italy (the Pesakim of 1519)” in *Studies in Jewish History and Booklore* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1944) 131-133 and Sonne, “Le-toldot kehilat Bologna,” 48-50. However, a more recent analysis of the Italian rabbinate by Robert Bonfil argues that Jewish communities in Italy did not have communally-appointed rabbis until the second-half of the sixteenth century. Nonetheless, Bonfil suggests that Abraham was widely respected among Italian rabbis, and Jews more generally, Bonfil, *Rabbis and Jewish Communities*, 53. Most famously, Abraham is known to have been one of the major participants in the Finzi-Norsa controversy of 1519—a debate, among other things, over whether the rabbis in one locale had authority over the Jews of other locales—which involved many of Italy’s rabbis.

introduction and the colophon to *Sefer Ḥasidim*, as well as an extensive accompanying table of contents. In the colophon, Abraham implies he was the owner of the manuscript of *Sefer Ḥasidim* that the partners printed, stating that the book “was not found in this region as far as Jerusalem (Micah 1:9)...[the] only hidden [copy] was with me. Because of its abundant importance and the value of its ideas to bring merit to the masses, I brought it out and it came to the hand of the dear printers to print it.”<sup>21</sup> The book’s appeal to readers, Abraham believed, was contingent upon his table of contents, which made the content of the book more accessible. In Abraham’s words, “In order to appreciate the benefits of this book and its profits, as a set table (*shulḥan arukh*) prepared before anyone who seeks the Lord and His reverence, I—the poor and insignificant one among the thousands signed at the end of this book—decreed to open a doorway and a gate with keys [i.e. the table of contents]. To this awesome book all who fear the Lord and contemplate His name will come and they will find easily all the pleasures of the King, King of the universe, which are in it.”<sup>22</sup>

It is notable that a Sephardic exile played such a major role in the printing of an Ashkenazic text. We do not know how Abraham came to own his copy of *Sefer Ḥasidim*. However, it is certain that the traditions of R. Judah he-Ḥasid and the *Ḥasidei Ashkenaz* were known in Spain as early as the fifteenth century. R. Jacob b. Asher, the Ashkenazi codifier who migrated to

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<sup>21</sup> ולא נמצא בגליל זה עד ירושלם עיר הקדש תו"בב רק אחד כמוס היה אתי לרוב חשיבותו ויוקר ענייניו ולזכות את הרבים הוצאתיהו ובא ליד המדפיסים היקרים להדפיסו.

<sup>22</sup> למען הבין תועלות הספר הזה ופרותיו כשולחן ערוך ומוכן לפני כל מבקש ה' ויראתו תקנתי אני הצעיר הדל באלפי החתום בסיום הספר לפתוח פתח ושער במפתחות ולספר הנורא הזה בו יבואו כל יראי ה' וחושבי שמו וימצאו בקלות כל מעדני מלך מלכו של עולם אשר בו....

Castile in the fourteenth century from Germany, cited traditions ascribed to Judah in his influential halakhic code the *Arba'ah Turim*.<sup>23</sup>

Isaiah Sonne suggested that Abraham was also involved in the production of the partners' editions of the *Piskei Halakhot* ("legal decisions") of the Italian kabbalist R. Menachem Recanati (1537-1538) and the responsa of the medieval Spanish halakhist R. Solomon b. Abraham Adret (1538-1539).<sup>24</sup> Because the table of contents appended to the responsa volume was lengthy and detailed, similar to the one in *Sefer Ḥasidim*, Sonne assumed Abraham wrote it as well. He further suggested that as a Sephardi Jew, Abraham would have been especially interested in disseminating the Sephardic legal traditions in Adret's responsa. Sonne also argued that the table of contents in Recanati's *pesakim* also "bore the stamp" of Abraham—though he did not elaborate.<sup>25</sup> Sonne's conclusions here are difficult to verify, especially since Abraham's name does not appear in either publication, unlike *Sefer Ḥasidim*. Moreover, the table of contents in Recanati's *pesakim* is more abbreviated and orderly than the tables in either the responsa volume or *Sefer Ḥasidim*.

## **R. Obadiah Sforno**

R. Obadiah Sforno was another important figure in Bologna who may have been involved in the partners' printing enterprise. Sforno, a physician and teacher who kept company with

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<sup>23</sup> See Jacob b. Asher, *Arba'ah turim: orah ḥayyim, hilkhoh birkot ha-shakhar ve-sha'ar ha-berachot* (Vilna, 1923) §46.

<sup>24</sup> Recanati's *Piskei Halakhot* was a first edition—the text was extant only in manuscript prior to the partners' publication. Selections from the RaShBa's responsa had been printed previously (in Rome and in Constantinople) but this edition was considered the most comprehensive, *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 2nd ed., s.v. "Recanati, Menahem ben Benjamin" and "Adret, Solomon ben Abraham."

<sup>25</sup> Sonne, "Le-toldot kehillat Bologna, 49-50.

Christian Hebraists, is known today primarily for his biblical commentaries.<sup>26</sup> After living in Ferrara and Rome, sometime around 1527, Sforino moved to Bologna where he practiced medicine, wrote, taught and acted as a rabbinical judge together with R. Abraham b. Moses ha-Cohen.<sup>27</sup> According to Sonne, both Sforino and Abraham “were active in” the partners’ press.<sup>28</sup> Aside from the data discussed above, Sonne gave no evidence for this claim. Sforino’s name is associated with only two of the partners’ publications: *Or Ammim* (“light of nations,” 1536-1537) and the aforementioned holiday *maḥzor* with Treves’ commentary. Sforino was the author of *Or Ammim*, a treatise harmonizing Jewish tradition and non-Jewish, scholastic philosophy. In the *maḥzor*, Sforino wrote a commentary on tractate Avot of the Mishnah, which was featured alongside Maimonides’ commentary.

Several years earlier, in a letter to his brother Hananel, Sforino mentioned that he was in the process of composing “a grammar book with a Latin translation” which was meant to “demonstrate the virtue of the Hebrew language over every other people’s language.”<sup>29</sup> Ariel

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<sup>26</sup> On Sforino, see Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli “*Ebrei, famiglie e città: gli Sforino di Bologna*,” *Zakhor* 3 (1999): 73; and Saverio Campanini, “Un intellettuale ebreo del rinascimento: ‘Ovadya Sforino a Bologna e i suoi rapporti con i cristiani’” in *Verso l’epilogo di una convivenza: gli ebrei a Bologna nel XVI secolo*, ed. Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli (Florence: Giuntina, 1996) 99–127.

<sup>27</sup> Campanini, “Un intellettuale,” 104.

<sup>28</sup> Sonne uses the Hebrew verb “טפל,” “L’toldot kehilat Bologna, 42.

<sup>29</sup> Sforino refers to Hebrew idiomatically as the “Holy Language” (לשון הקדש) and Latin as “Christian” (נוצרית). The letter is one of a series found in MS Parma 2399, published by Joseph Laras, “Letters from Rabbi Obadiah Sforino” [Hebrew], *Sinai* 62 (1968): 262–267. The letter is undated, but Laras suggests that because Sforino’s brother lived in Bologna, Sforino himself could not be living there as well. Thus, the letter had to have been written prior to Sforino’s arrival in the city in 1527. Interestingly, Sforino comments that he was preparing the grammar “at the request of the Lord of Fusignano,” namely, the humanist, Celio Calcagnini, see Campanini, “Un intellettuale,” 111. On the concept of the superiority of the Hebrew language in the early modern period, see Adam Shear, *The Kuzari and the Shaping of Jewish Identity, 1167-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 98-103.



Toaff has asserted that the partners may have also sought to print this grammar.<sup>30</sup> The printing licenses they procured from Pope Paul III state explicitly that the partners intended to publish a “Hebrew grammar necessary for reading and understanding” other Hebrew books.<sup>31</sup> In the end, Sforino’s grammar was never printed, by the partners or any other press, and no copies of the manuscript remain.<sup>32</sup> From this data, it is difficult to determine if, in fact, the partners intended to print Sforino’s grammar or someone else’s, and if indeed Sforino was involved in the partners’ press at all, beyond his role as an author.

### **Azariah de’ Rossi**

Azariah de’ Rossi was another well-known Italian Jewish figure who left his mark on the partners’ publications. De’ Rossi wrote a poem in praise of Joseph b. David ibn Yahyah’s treatise, *Torah Or* (“the light of Torah”), which the partners published the same year as *Sefer Ḥasidim* (1538).<sup>33</sup> The poem, a Hebrew acrostic which spells out “Azariah,” lauds Joseph and *Torah Or* as

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<sup>30</sup> See Ariel Toaff, “Bologna ebraica negli studi recenti” in *La cultura ebraica a Bologna tra medioevo e rinascimento*, ed. Mauro Perani (Florence: Giuntina, 2002) 24. Sforino arrived in Bologna in 1527 and the partners began printing Hebrew books in 1537.

<sup>31</sup> The Latin document reads, “gramaticam hebraicam sine qua ad lecturam et intelligentiam dictorum librorum pervenire non potest,” Tamburini, *Ebrei, saraceni, cristiani*, 111.

<sup>32</sup> Campanini suggests that Sforino’s grammar was not printed because of the market for Hebrew grammars was already “saturated” with Reuchlin’s *De rudimentis Hebraicis* (Pforzheim, 1506) and Abraham de Balme’s *Mikneh Avram* (Venice, 1523), Campanini, “Un intellettuale,” 111.

<sup>33</sup> On the ascription of the acrostic poem to de’ Rossi, see the Azariah de’ Rossi, *Sefer me’or einayim*, ed. David Cassel (Vina: Romm, 1866), 144 and Israel Davidson, *Thesaurus of Mediaeval Hebrew Poetry*, vol. 3 (New York: K’tav Publishing House, 1970), 253. It is possible, however, that this poem was written by another Azariah, not the well-known Azariah de’ Rossi. However, the timing and other circumstantial data—discussed below—lend this ascription a significant degree of probability.

sources of enlightenment. The partners printed the poem on the last page of the book prior to its colophon to entice potential purchasers.<sup>34</sup>

De' Rossi, who some have dubbed the first modern Jewish historian, was born in Mantua and spent much of his life in and around Ferrara, along with stints in Bologna.<sup>35</sup> We know from his own testimony that he attended lectures in geometry at the University of Bologna and that he was in the city in 1567 when Pope Pius V expelled the Jews of the Papal States.<sup>36</sup> However, at the time of *Torah Or*'s publication in 1538, de' Rossi would have been fairly young, in his mid-twenties. Joanna Weinberg has analyzed a commonplace book de' Rossi wrote during this decade of his life and noted that it contains a number of poems—some written by de' Rossi himself.<sup>37</sup> Further, de' Rossi concluded his magnum opus, *Me'or Einayim* (“the light to the eyes,” 1573-1575), with a study of biblical poetics.<sup>38</sup> Most importantly, de' Rossi is known to have au-

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<sup>34</sup> Joseph b. David ibn Yahyah, *Torah Or* (Bologna: 1538). On the devices printers used to advertise their titles, see chapters 2 and 4, as well as, Brian Richardson, *Print Culture in Renaissance Italy: The Editor and the Vernacular Text, 1470-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Richardson, *Printers, Writers and Readers*; Anthony Grafton, *The Culture of Correction in Renaissance Europe* (London: British Library, 2011); Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

<sup>35</sup> On de' Rossi as an historian, see Salo W. Baron, “Azariah de' Rossi: A Biographical Sketch” in *History and Jewish Historians* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1964) 167-173; Yosef H. Yerushalmi, “Clio and the Jews: Reflections on Jewish Historiography in the Sixteenth Century” in *Essential Papers on Jewish Culture in Renaissance and Baroque Italy*, ed. David Ruderman (New York: New York University Press, 1992); Joanna Weinberg, translator's introduction to *The Light of the Eyes* by Azariah de' Rossi, trans. Joanna Weinberg (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001) xiii-xlv.

<sup>36</sup> De' Rossi, *Light of the Eyes*, 30 and 707. De' Rossi, like many but not all of the city's Jews, subsequently fled to Ferrara, see Daniel Carpi, “Geirush ha-yehudim mimedinat ha-kenisiyah be-yemei ha-apiphior Pius ha-ḥamishi u-mishpatei ha-ḥakirah neged yehudei Bologna (1566-1569)” in *Scritti in memoria di Enzo Serani*, eds. Daniel Carpi, Attilio Milano and Umberto Nahon (Jerusalem: Fondazione Sally Mayer, 1970) 145-165.

<sup>37</sup> Copying and writing poetry was a common educational technique in the early modern period, Weinberg, *Light of the Eyes*, xiv-xv.

<sup>38</sup> De' Rossi, *Light of the Eyes*, 710-721. On de' Rossi's poetry, see Joanna Weinberg, “Poetry and Patronage: Azariah De' Rossi's Elegies for Margaret of Savoy,” *Jewish History* 21, no. 1 (2007): 100.

thored other laudatory poems that accompanied new publications, such as a new edition of Isaac Abravanel's *Mirkevet ha-Mishneh* (Sabbioneta, 1551).<sup>39</sup>

Finally, while we know little in detail about how he earned a living over much of his life, we do know that at the age of 35 (during the mid-1540s), de' Rossi told a Christian physician that he had previously worked as a censor of Hebrew books.<sup>40</sup> Weinberg has suggested that de' Rossi was likely "working on behalf of the Jewish community" to ensure that Jewish books did not contain anything "that might be regarded as derogatory to the Christian faith."<sup>41</sup> Given when this conversation occurred, and the limited number of Hebrew presses at the time, it is within the realm of possibility that de' Rossi worked in Bologna at the partners' press censoring manuscripts prior to their publication during the late-1530s.<sup>42</sup> This is, of course, a conjecture based on circumstantial evidence, but the presence of de' Rossi's poem in *Torah Or* and his conversation with the physician point to this possibility.

### **Bologna: Demography, Social Organization and Culture**

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<sup>39</sup> For an anthology of this poetry, see the appendix to the Cassel edition of *Me'or Einayim*, De' Rossi, *Sefer me'or einayim*, 139-144.

<sup>40</sup> The physician Amatus Lusitanus describes the meeting in his book *Centuriae medicinales*, see Weinberg, *Light of the Eyes*, xv. De' Rossi's meeting with Lusitanus, according to Weinberg, likely occurred in Ferrara, which would indicate that de' Rossi had multiple stays in Bologna: One in the 1530s, when he may have been involved in the partners' press, and one in the 1560s, which concluded with his expulsion.

<sup>41</sup> Weinberg, *Light to the Eyes*, xvi. There was no formal, institutionalized censorship of Hebrew books in Italy prior to the 1550s.

<sup>42</sup> Weinberg estimates that de' Rossi was born around 1511, meaning that de' Rossi could have only been referring to the years (generously) between 1525 and 1550. During this period, Hebrew presses also operated in Venice (Bomberg), Rimini (Soncino) and Rome, briefly, for a list of Italian presses, see Amram, *Makers of Hebrew Books*. The nature of this censorship will be discussed in greater detail below.

The social and cultural currents that shaped Jewish life in Bologna provide the context for the partners' decision to establish a Hebrew press there. Before reflecting on why the partners chose to print *Sefer Hasidim*, therefore, it is necessary to consider the partners' place within the larger history of Bolognese Jewry, as well as the silk and printing trades in the city.

Throughout the medieval period, control of Bologna alternated among Italy's noble families. From 1506, however, the city found itself squarely in papal hands.<sup>43</sup> Jews had resided there from at least the mid-fourteenth century.<sup>44</sup> In 1416, the city was the site of the first synod of Italian Jewish leaders and by the early-sixteenth century, the community had become especially large and prosperous.<sup>45</sup> According to Bernard Cooperman, the Jewish population swelled to around one thousand members and the city became "the financial capital of Jewish Italy." Over seventeen Jewish loan-banks operated there and the community was enriched by its participation in various trades, not in the least silk work and printing.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> *Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. "Bologna."

<sup>44</sup> On the basis of literary evidence, Mauro Perani and Bracha Rivlin suggest that Jews resided in Bologna as early as the fourth century, CE. Attilio Milano points to the earliest extant Jewish residence permits, from the mid-fourteenth century, as the earliest evidence for a "documented Jewish presence" in the city. On this and the history of Jewish life in Bologna more generally, see Milano's article in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 2nd. ed., s.v. "Bologna;" Mauro Perani and Bracha Rivlin, *Vita religiosa ebraica a bologna nel cinquecento: Gli statuti della confraternita dei solerti* (Florence: Giuntina, 2000), 73-82; Toaff, "Bologna ebraica," 13-28.

<sup>45</sup> See, Louis Finkelstein, *Jewish Self-Government in the Middle Ages* (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1924) 86-87.

<sup>46</sup> Bernard Cooperman, "Political Discourse in a Kabbalistic Register: Isaac De Lattes' Plea for Stronger Communal Government" in *Be'erot Yitzhak: Studies in Memory of Isadore Twersky*, ed. Jay Michael Harris (Cambridge: Harvard Center for Jewish Studies, 2005) 47. The figure of around 1000 individuals is standard. Moses Shulvass put the number of Jews in Rome during the first half of the sixteenth century at between 1,500 and 1,800. He estimated that about 1,000 Jews resided in Venice and perhaps as many as 2,000 Jews resided in Mantua and Ferrara, respectively, Moses A. Shulvass, *The Jews in the World of the Renaissance*, trans. Elvin I. Kose (Leiden: Brill, 1973) 15-28. Building on these figures, it is clear that Bologna possessed one of the larger Jewish communities in Italy during the sixteenth century, though certainly not one of the largest. The total population of Bologna during this period was around 60,000, meaning that Jews made up under two percent of the total. On the total population of Bologna, see Jan de Vries, *The City: European Urbanization, 1500-1800*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997) 276.

A crucial factor in the growth of Bologna's Jewish population was an influx of immigrants from the Iberian peninsula, beginning with the expulsion of the Jews of Spain in 1492. Moses Shulvass estimated that over 9,000 Spanish Jews landed on the Italian peninsula after 1492, some settling only temporarily, others permanently. The numbers of newcomers increased further with the arrival of *conversos* and their reversion to Judaism during the following century.<sup>47</sup> At least one of the partners, R. Aryeh b. R. Solomon Hayyim of Monselice, traced his roots back to Spain—as evinced by his use of the Spanish honorific “Don.”<sup>48</sup> Further, R. Abraham b. Moses ha-Cohen's prominence as a rabbi in Bologna is a testament to the integration of the Iberian refugees into the post-expulsion Italian milieu.

A second factor in the growth of Bologna's Jewish population was the arrival of loan-bankers from Florence after 1527.<sup>49</sup> That year, Florence's ruling family, the Medici, lost control of the city in the War of the League of Cognac. Florence's new imperial rulers were unwilling to renew the Jews' residence and banking privileges, and they were forced to flee to neighboring towns—especially those under more-friendly Papal control, such as Bologna. The Florentine

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<sup>47</sup> Shulvass, *Jews of the World of the Renaissance*, 6.

<sup>48</sup> See Treves, *Maḥzor k'fi minhag kehillat kodesh Roma*, introduction.

<sup>49</sup> Despite losing Florence, the Medici still controlled the Papacy and thus their Jewish banker clients were welcomed into Bologna, which had been integrated into the Papal States through the War of the League of Cambrai (1508-1516), see Stefanie B. Siegmund, *The Medici State and the Ghetto of Florence: The Construction of an Early Modern Jewish Community* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006) 98, and Sonne, “Le-toldot kehillat Bologna,” 78.

bankers brought considerable wealth to Bologna and used it to exert control over communal affairs.<sup>50</sup>

The arrival of these two Jewish groups in Bologna—Iberian refugees and Florentine bankers—changed the community’s organization. The Iberian refugees sought to preserve their unique practices and halakhic traditions, while new banking elite sought to displace the community’s older commercial elite.<sup>51</sup> R. Abraham b. Moses ha-Cohen was an important player in the debates between these factions. During the 1520s and 1530s, he authored a series of legal opinions in which he sought to preserve communal custom and ward off outsiders’ interference.<sup>52</sup> Cooperman has asserted that the emergence of a “new and more formal political system” in Bologna during this period—as represented by Abraham’s efforts—may have also resulted from the popularization of Sephardic traditions of communal administration by Iberian immigrants, like Abraham, in response to intra-communal conflict.<sup>53</sup>

This fractiousness, however, did not impede Bologna from becoming a vibrant center of Jewish learning and religious culture. By 1554, according to a Papal census, there were at least

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<sup>50</sup> Sonne discusses the effect of the bankers’ wealth on Bolognese Jewry in “Le-toldot kehillat Bologna,” 37-38. Bonfil has since shown that Sonne’s emphasis on the rise of the “itinerant rabbi” is misplaced, see Bonfil, *Rabbis and Jewish Communities*, 192-206. For a more recent and more nuanced discussion, see Bernard Cooperman, “Theorizing Jewish Self-Government in Early Modern Italy” in *Una manna buona per mantova: studi in onore di Vittore Colorni*, ed. Mauro Perani (Florence: L.S. Olschki, 2004) 365–380. An additional factor that may have contributed to the growth of Bologna’s Jewish population was the arrival of Roman Jews in the city after the Sack of Rome in 1527. The Sack likely contributed to the decline of the Roman Jewish population over the course of the sixteenth century—see Shulvass, *Jews in the World of the Renaissance*, 23—but according to Stow, the Sack had only a minor impact of the life of the Roman community, Kenneth Stow, *The Jews in Rome*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1995) xi-xii.

<sup>51</sup> Cooperman notes that there is a good deal of disagreement over the extent of the conflict between Iberian and Italian Jews during this period. For a summary of the debate, see Bernard D. Cooperman, “Ethnicity and Institution Building Among Jews in Early Modern Rome,” *AJS Review* 30, no. 1 (April 2006): 119–145; Cooperman, “Political Discourse,” 48-51.

<sup>52</sup> Cooperman, “Political Discourse,” 48-52. See also Bonfil, *Rabbis and Jewish Communities*, 193-196.

<sup>53</sup> Cooperman, “Theorizing Jewish Self-Government,” 15. See also, Jacob Katz, *Tradition and Crisis: Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages*, trans. Bernard Dov Cooperman (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000) 68; Bonfil, *Rabbis and Jewish Communities*, 110.

11 synagogues in the city.<sup>54</sup> Torah scholars and students praised Bologna for the dynamism and sophistication of its scholarship. In a letter to his father, for instance, Elhanan da Rieti, the son of the Sienese banker R. Ishmael da Rieti, asked if an associate of his father who was visiting Bologna could “gather the spirit of wisdom by the handful there, Bologna, and novellae of the *yeshivah*, bring it back to me safely.”<sup>55</sup> Cooperman has noted too how *kabbalah* (Jewish mysticism) “gained broad cultural prestige” during this period and how kabbalistic ideas “were integrated into long-existing systems of Jewish discourse,” such as the synagogue sermon.<sup>56</sup> During the 1540s, two confraternities (*havurot*) were established for Jews who wished to commit themselves to set codes of pious strictures and perform charitable acts.<sup>57</sup> Finally, the city was also home to one of Europe’s finest universities, where Jews, such as Azariah de’ Rossi, were known to sit in on classes. Just as Bolognese printers supplied the city’s numerous university students and teachers with school books, so too the partners supplied religious texts to a community known for its learning and piety.<sup>58</sup>

## Printing

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<sup>54</sup> Perani and Rivlin, *Vita religiosa ebraica*, 74.

<sup>55</sup> Alexander Marx, “R. Yosef ish Arli be-tor moreh ve-rosh yeshivah be-Siena” in *Sefer yovel: Likhvod Levi Gintzburg, helek ivri*, vol. 2 (New York: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1946) 278-9.

<sup>56</sup> Cooperman, “Political Discourse,” 64-67.

<sup>57</sup> See Mauro Perani and Bracha Rivlin, *Vita religiosa ebraica a bologna nel cinquecento: gli statuti della confraternita dei solerti* (Florence: Giuntina, 2000).

<sup>58</sup> On the relationship between the University of Bologna and the city’s presses, see below, as well as Carl F. Bühler, *The University and the Press in Fifteenth-Century Bologna* (Notre Dame, IN: Mediaeval Institute, University of Notre Dame, 1958).

Printing flourished in Italy during the late-fifteenth century in locations known previously for manuscript production, often near universities.<sup>59</sup> In 1471, the first press was established in Bologna.<sup>60</sup> In the years that followed, Bologna was one of only five Italian cities where presses operated continuously to the end of the sixteenth century.<sup>61</sup>

Like the partners' Hebrew press some sixty years later, three men found Bologna's first print shop—Francesco dal Pozzo, Baldassarre Azzoguidi and Annibale Malpigli—who shared in funding, editing and printing editions of classical and medieval texts.<sup>62</sup> The city's first Hebrew press began operating only a few years later in 1477. That year, three men—Meister Joseph, Neriyah Hayyim Mordecai and Hezekiah of Ventura—published an edition of the Book of Psalms with R. David Kimkhi's commentary. Shortly thereafter they produced a second, corrected edition, and perhaps a third, before ceasing operation.<sup>63</sup> In 1482, the itinerant printer, R. Abraham b. Hayyim dei Tintori (aka Abraham of the Dyers) of Pesaro printed an edition of the Penta-

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<sup>59</sup> Recent studies emphasize the continuity of script and print, see Richardson, *Printing, Writers and Readers* and David McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order, 1450-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), as well as Neil Harris, "The History of the Book in Italy" in *The Oxford Companion to the Book*, vol. 1, eds. Michael F. Suarez, S.J. Woudhuysen and H. R. Woudhuysen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) 257-265.

<sup>60</sup> Printing in Italy is generally thought to have begun in Subaico, outside Rome, in 1465, Harris, "The History of the Book," 257.

<sup>61</sup> According to Harris, during the fifteenth and early-sixteenth centuries, it was largely a peripatetic enterprise, no sooner did a printer print a book in a given locale than he decided to pull up stakes and move elsewhere, see Harris, "The History of the Book," 259. The fact that forty-seven presses were known to have operated in Bologna prior to 1500, many producing but one title, demonstrates the instability of the business of printing books during this period, Bühler, *The University and the Press*, 43.

<sup>62</sup> All three were humanists from prominent Bologna families with close ties to the city's illustrious university. Azzoguidi had two brothers who were faculty members and Malpigli was a faculty member himself, see Bühler, *University and the Press*, 15-16. The fact that this press was also founded by three men is not merely a coincidence. Establishing a press during the fifteenth and early-sixteenth centuries was an expensive endeavor and press founders required significant starting capital—hence the need for collaboration.

<sup>63</sup> Friedberg, *Toldot ha-defus*, 28; Amram, *Makers of Hebrew Books*, 48. Amram, drawing on Steinschneider, points out that the fact that Joseph used the German title "Meister" indicates that he was originally from Germany.



teuch with vowels and cantillation, as well as commentaries, in the city.<sup>64</sup> From 1482 until 1537, no Hebrew books were printed in Bologna.<sup>65</sup> But in 1536, the partners began to lay the groundwork for a new Hebrew press.

The earliest reference to the partners' printing venture is a papal privilege from November, 1536, granting "Emanuel Abraham (i.e. R. Menachem b. R. Abraham of Modena) and his "Jewish associates" the right to print "the books of Old Testament with their other ancient commentaries, the offices that are read in synagogues—which do not contain any heresies against Jesus Christ—and the blessings for meals, written in the Hebrew language, paying the usual fee to be paid by the Christians."<sup>66</sup>

We can only speculate as to why the partners established their Hebrew press at this particular time. Certainly, the growth of the city's population during the first half of the sixteenth century—as a result of Iberian refugees and Florentine bankers, and those who fled the Sack of Rome in 1527 as well—brought new sources of wealth and learning to the city. Indeed, R. Abraham b. Moses ha-Cohen only arrived in Bologna in the early 1500s and Sforzo in 1527. Second, the partners entered the printing business at the same time that the celebrated Venetian Hebrew

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<sup>64</sup> Friedberg, *Toldot ha-defus*, 29 and Amram, *Makers of Hebrew Books*, 42. Abraham the Dyer was assisted by the corrector, Joseph of Strasbourg, who wrote the book's colophon. Amram suggests that this Joseph was likely the same "Meister Joseph" of the earlier Bologna press.

<sup>65</sup> Perhaps, this was a consequence of the region's political instability. Bologna, and Romagna more generally, was the site of repeated struggles between warring European powers, especially during the War of the League of Cambray (1508-1516). For an overview, see Sonne, "Le-toldot kehillat Bologna," 35-37.

<sup>66</sup> My translation is based on Tamburini's Italian translation of the privilege; here is Tamburini's Latin transcription: "Paulus (III)... Emanueli Habraham eiusque sociis hebreis in civitate nostra Bononiae... vos Emanuel et sodi libros Veteris Testamenti cum suis commentariis antiquis et libros officiorum que in Sinagogis leguntur in quibus nulla blasphemiam contra Iesum Christum...continetur et benedictionem mensae, hebraicis litteris conscriptos, qui imprimi et venumdari consueverunt et impressi reperiuntur tam in civitate Bononiae quam in locis Romanae Ecclesie subiectis...imprimere... eosque cum solutione tamen datii per christifideles solvi soliti, asportare et ubilibet vendere possitis, auctoritate apostolica liberam potestatem et facultatem concedimus per presentes...." Tamburini, *Ebrei, saraceni, cristiani*, 110.

press of Daniel Bomberg appears to have encountered difficulties. Beginning in the early 1530s, Bomberg produced fewer and fewer titles every year.<sup>67</sup> Then, in 1536, Bomberg's government-decreed monopoly on Hebrew printing in Venice lapsed. Shortly thereafter, in 1538, Bomberg returned home to his native Antwerp. Perhaps the partners were aware of these events and believed Bomberg's weakened position created an opening for competition.<sup>68</sup>

### Silk

The partners likely would not have been able to establish their press without sufficient capital and expertise, resources they obtained in the silk trade which flourished in Bologna during the sixteenth century. As discussed above, the partners referred to themselves as the “the partners, makers of silk-work” on their title pages and in their colophons.<sup>69</sup> According to Luca Molà, from the thirteenth century through the seventeenth century, Bologna was one of Italy's principle silk producing cities—along with Genoa, Venice and Lucca.<sup>70</sup> Carlo Poni has argued that during the fourteenth century, the silk trade in Bologna took on a “proto-industrial” character, where a complex series of processes—winding (twice), spinning, dying and weaving—were accomplished in quick succession “under a single roof” by workers using water-powered ma-

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<sup>67</sup> Amram, *Makers of Hebrew Books*, 190 and Habermann, *Ha-madpis Daniel Bombergi* (Safed: Museum of Printing Art, 1978).

<sup>68</sup> On Bomberg's privileges, see Christopher L. C. E. Witcomb, *Copyright in the Renaissance: Printers and the Privilegio in Sixteenth-Century Venice and Rome* (Leiden: Brill, 2004) 43-45. On the operation of his press, see Habermann, *Ha'madpis Daniel Bombergi*, 14-15.

<sup>69</sup> עשי מלאכת המשי

<sup>70</sup> Luca Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000) 3.

chinery.<sup>71</sup> Bologna's mechanized silk mills became famous across Europe for producing a thinner, more durable yarn that was used in a variety of products, especially veils.<sup>72</sup>

During the sixteenth century, silk became the city's foremost export and it has been estimated that as much as 40 percent of the city's population was involved in the production of silk textiles.<sup>73</sup> Jews, especially of Spanish origin, are known to have been involved in this trade. Spanish Jews and *conversos* brought expertise in silk production with them to Italy and integrated into the established Italian commercial networks.<sup>74</sup> Alberta Toniolo has suggested that the arrival of Spanish Jews in Italy after 1492 led to the popularity of new "Spanish style" silk garments in several Italian cities.<sup>75</sup> For Bologna, Toniolo has suggested that a "gradual increase in activity and investment" in silk manufacture corresponds to the arrival of the Spanish Jews.<sup>76</sup> Further, she has shown that a decline in membership in the silk guild (*l'Arte della Seta*) followed the expulsion of the Bolognese Jews in 1569.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Carlo Poni, "Per la storia del distretto industriale serico di Bologna (secoli XVI-XIX)," *Quaderni Storici* 73 (April 1990): 93-4.

<sup>72</sup> According to Poni, Bologna maintained a Europe-wide monopoly on silk veils until "eve of the French Revolution," Poni, "Per la storia del distretto industriale serico," 94.

<sup>73</sup> Forty percent of the total Bolognese population of 60,000 is equivalent to 24,000 individuals, including poor women and children, as well as nuns. The figure is based on a 1587 census of silk-workers and it may be compared to the percentage of silk-workers in the general population in Genoa (60%) and in Venice (20%), see Molà, *Silk Industry*, 15-17. See also Paola Massa Piergiorganni, "Technological Typologies and Economic Organisation of Silk Workers in Italy, from the XIVth to the XVIIIth Centuries," *Journal of European Economic History* (Winter 1993): 553. Piergiorganni admits that such figures seem to be exaggerated, but the exaggeration "shows how important silk production was" in sixteenth century Bologna.

<sup>74</sup> According to Molà, prior to the conversionary riots of 1391, silk manufacture in Barcelona and Valencia was "almost completely in the hands of Jewish artisans, and after the pogroms of 1391 it was kept alive by conversos as well as by Christians, Molà, *Silk Industry*, 21.

<sup>75</sup> Alberta Toniolo, "Los Sefarditas Españoles y la sedería Italiana en la primera edad moderna," *Revista De Historia Industrial* 12 (1997): 58-59.

<sup>76</sup> Spanish Jews were permitted to join the silk guild, Alberta Toniolo, "Els Mercats de les Sedes: Paper i Herència dels Sefardites a Bolognya en L'Edat Moderna," *Revista d'Història Medieval* 4 (1993): 37.

<sup>77</sup> Toniolo, "Los Sefarditas," 65.

While this relationship between silk production and printing has yet to be seriously assessed by scholars, we can draw some tentative, general conclusions from what we know about both trades in the sixteenth century.<sup>78</sup> First, the economics of silk and printed book production were similar: In both fields, the cost of raw materials and skilled labor far exceeded the cost of the technological infrastructure.<sup>79</sup> One reason for the high cost of labor was the necessity of employing skilled craftsmen to carry out a series of highly specific processes (compositing and editing printed texts, for instance, and weaving and dying silk yarn).<sup>80</sup> These processes had to be carefully coordinated to ensure the quality of the final product and this required the oversight of a skilled manager and adequate capital to underwrite the costs. Finally, printing and silk manufacture were fundamentally urban trades, relying on the specific resources cities offered entrepreneurs: established commercial networks to provide a stream of raw materials and to transport finished products to far-off markets, as well as a ready supply of skilled labor.<sup>81</sup>

Concerning the partners' specifically, there seem to be few, if any, witnesses to their involvement in Bologna's silk trade, other than their own self-identification as "makers of silk-work."<sup>82</sup> Toaff has speculated that R. Abraham b. Moses ha-Cohen was related to a family of Sephardic textile and silk merchants who were welcomed into Ferrara by Duke Ercole I in 1496,

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<sup>78</sup> Some have hinted at the existence of a relationship between printing and textile (and silk) production, Eisenstein, *The Printing Press*, 30 and Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *The Coming of the Book: Impact of Printing, 1450-1800*, trans. David Gerard (London: N.L.B., 1976) 46.

<sup>79</sup> Compare Piergiovanni, "Technological Typologies," 543 with Richardson, *Printing, Writers and Readers*, 25-26 and Baruchson, "Money and Culture," 24.

<sup>80</sup> On skill and specialization, compare Piergiovanni, "Technological Typologies," 546 and Richardson, *Printing, Writers and Readers*, 17-26.

<sup>81</sup> On the importance of the city, see Molà, *Silk Industry*, 14 and Richardson, *Printing, Writers and Readers*, 4-5.

<sup>82</sup> Toaff has called that this interrelationship of "a theme of great beauty and importance, which has not yet been addressed with the attention and study it deserves," Toaff, "Bologna ebraica," 25.

after their flight from Spain.<sup>83</sup> Further, based on his use of the Spanish honorific “Don,” R. Don Aryeh b. R. Solomon Hayyim of Monselice may have also descended from Spanish Jews who brought expertise in silk manufacture to Italy. Further, given what we know about the prosperity of the silk trade in Bologna, it seems reasonable to conclude that the partners were able to cover the costs of establishing themselves as printers—procuring the raw materials, employing craftsmen, supervising the operation of the press, enduring long stretches between a book’s publication and its sale—because they were able to draw on capital and expertise accumulated previously in the silk trade.

### **The Partners’ Catalogue of Publications**

In order to understand why the partners printed *Sefer Hasidim* and the creative choices involved in the project, we can reflect on and generalize from all nine of their printed titles. In doing so, three important questions arise: Were the partners committed to a specific editorial vision? How was that vision expressed in their catalogue of printed titles, especially *Sefer Hasidim*? And, to whom did the partners intend to market their edition?

It is well known that during the first decades of European printing, printers selected their titles cautiously. In Richardson’s words, “Early publishing was initially rather conservative and cautious in its choice of subject matter and language. Producers of books naturally preferred to risk their capital on what was tried and tested among established readers.” The vast majority of

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<sup>83</sup> Toaff, “Bologna Ebraica,” 25. According to a notorial record, Ercole I welcomed an Abramo Cohen, son of David, “Spaniard” and “rag-dealer” to Ferrara in 1496, Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli, “Ferrara, ovvero un porto placido e sicuro tra XV e XVI secolo” in *Vita cultura ebraica nello stato estense*, eds. Euride Fregni and Mauro Perani (Bologna: Edizione Fattoadarte, 1993) 245. On the Cohen family in the Italian silk industry, see Toniolo, “Los Se-farditas,” 63. Our Abraham did in fact stop first in Ferrara upon arriving in Italy before journeying further to Bologna. However, it is unlikely—given the difference in patronymic—that the Abramo Cohen mentioned in the notorial record was our Abraham.

incunabula were classical works in Latin. Nearly a quarter were by Cicero.<sup>84</sup> During the sixteenth century, however, printers began to change their approach as they sought to appeal to more readers. They began to produce titles in new genres (such as religious polemics and textbooks), as well as works written by living authors and texts in vernacular languages. As Andrew Pettegree has written, “The new confidence of the early-sixteenth century permitted more daring choices.”<sup>85</sup>

This pattern holds for Hebrew incunabula (of which there are around 150 identified titles) and early-sixteenth-century works. The vast majority of Hebrew incunabula are canonical texts: Bibles, biblical exegesis, Talmudic tractates and a limited range of medieval halakhic and philosophical works.<sup>86</sup> During the sixteenth century, however, Hebrew printers began to publish works by living authors and new genres, as well as less widely known medieval texts and even texts in Jewish vernacular languages.<sup>87</sup>

The partners’ nine titles exemplify the more expansive editorial horizons of the sixteenth century.<sup>88</sup> Indeed, nearly all (seven of nine) of their publications were first editions: Some were medieval texts circulating only in manuscript—such as *Sefer Ḥasidim* or the *Piskei Halakhot* of R. Menachem Recanati—while others—such as S’forno’s *Or Ammim* and R. Joseph b. David ibn

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<sup>84</sup> Richardson, *Printing, Writers and Readers*, 136 and Howard Jones, *Printing the Classical Text* (Utrecht: Hes & De Graaf, 2004) 26.

<sup>85</sup> Andrew Pettegree, *The Book in the Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010) 66.

<sup>86</sup> See A.K. Offenberg, *A Choice of Corals: Facets of Fifteenth-Century Hebrew Printing* (Nieuwkoop, Netherlands: De Graaf, 1992) and *Encyclopedia Judaica*, s.v. “Incunabula,” as well as Shear and Hacker’s discussion, Joseph R. Hacker and Adam Shear, introduction to *The Hebrew Book in Early Modern Italy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011) 2, 199 n. 4.

<sup>87</sup> See Shear and Hacker, *The Hebrew Book*, 4.

<sup>88</sup> See Appendix A, for a list of the partners’ titles.

Yahya's, *Torah Or*—were recently composed by their authors. Indeed, even though several Hebrew prayer books were printed during the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth century, the partners' three liturgical publications were distinguished by the inclusion of newly printed or composed material. For instance, in their *siddur* (1537), the partners included “*seder ma'arakhah*” (or as they called it, “*seder ma'arekhet Eliyahu*”), a daily commemoration of Temple sacrifices attributed to the medieval French mystic and poet R. Eliyahu b. Menachem of Le Mans.<sup>89</sup> Their second liturgical publication, entitled *Tefillot Latini* (1538), was a translation of the *siddur* into Judeo-Italian.<sup>90</sup> This was only the second vernacular translation of the *siddur* ever printed and it was explicitly aimed at “women” who “wished to say their prayers in Judeo-Italian” rather than in Hebrew (which presumably many women did not understand).<sup>91</sup> Their third liturgical publication was the aforementioned *maḥzor* with R. Yohanan b. Joseph Treves's newly composed commentary, as well as Sforno's commentary on Mishnah Avot.

## Philosophy

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<sup>89</sup> The *siddur* is not paginated, but *Seder ma'arekhet Eliyahu* begins in the morning prayers after the hymn “*Adon Olam*.” On printing of this ritual, see Samuel David Luzzatto, ed. *Mavo le-maḥzor b'nai Roma* (Tel Aviv: D'vir, 1966) 125. On R. Eliyahu b. Menachem and the *Seder ha-ma'arah*, see Avraham Grossman, *Hakhmei Tzarfat ha-rishonim: koroteihem, darkham be-hanhagat ha-tzibur, ve-yetziratan ha-ruḥanit* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2001) 84-104, 102-104.

<sup>90</sup> The partners' translation was entitled *Tefillot Latini* and the language it was written in was referred to as *latino* by the printers because, according to Umberto Cassuto, it was the custom of Mediterranean Jews to refer to the language of their particular locale as “latino” or “ladino” in place of the Hebrew, *la'az*. On this convention and the history of Judeo-Italian translations of the prayer translation in general, Umberto Cassuto, “Les traductions judéo-italiennes du Rituel,” *Revue des Études Juives* 89, no. 177-178 (1930): 260–280.

<sup>91</sup> The first printed vernacular translation of the *siddur*, also in Italian, was produced by Gershom Soncino in Fano in 1505. Vernacular translations of the liturgy—while rare—existed in manuscript since the Middle Ages, see Stefan C. Reif, “From Printed Prayers to the Spread of Pietistic Ones” in *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer: New Perspectives on Jewish Liturgical History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 222, 386 n. 31. Despite the explicit claim that the partners printed this *siddur* at the behest of female readers, it would of course have been valuable to men who did not have knowledge of Hebrew as well.

Generalizing from this catalogue of titles, it is clear that the partners' intended to market their publications, including *Sefer Hasidim*, to Italian Jewish scholars and intellectuals. The partners' titles addressed these readers' central concerns, primary among them, the compatibility of Jewish theology and non-Jewish philosophy (which, in this period, was synonymous with Aristotelianism). As Robert Bonfil has shown, the question of the legitimacy of the study of philosophy animated rabbinic circles in Italy, and especially in Bologna, during the early-sixteenth century.<sup>92</sup> On one side of this debate stood Sforzo's *Or Ammim*—a justification of Jewish views of the human relationship to God in the style of late-medieval scholastic philosophy, inspired by Averroes and Maimonides.<sup>93</sup> The other side of the debate stood Yahya's *Torah Or*, where Yahya argued that the teachings of philosophy, as represented by Maimonides, were anathema to Jewish theology.<sup>94</sup>

The partners also broached the question of the value and permissibility of philosophical study in their edition of R. Solomon b. Abraham Adret's responsa, entitled *Teshuvot She'elot me-ha-Eshel ha-Gadol* (1538-1539). Adret, one of the leading rabbis of thirteenth century Spain, condemned the study of philosophy (*hokhmot hizoniyot*) by those unschooled in Jewish law. He believed that philosophy had lured young Jews away from faith into heresy. In 1305, along with the other leading rabbis of Barcelona, Adret imposed a ban (*herem*) on people under the age of

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<sup>92</sup> Bonfil suggests that "these were the main questions which interested people during that period"—perhaps we should revise "people" to "scholars," Bonfil, *Rabbis and Jewish Communities*, 284-294.

<sup>93</sup> At the heart of these debates were issues related to the nature of the human soul and the election of the Jewish people. For an analysis of the terms of Sforzo's argument and his rhetorical style, see Robert Bonfil, "Torat ha-nefesh ve-ha-kedushah be-mishnat R. Ovadia Sforzo," *Eshel Beer Sheva* 1 (1976): 200-257

<sup>94</sup> For a summary of *Torah Or*, see Israel Zinberg, *A History of Jewish Literature: Italian Jewry in the Renaissance Era*, trans. Bernard Martin (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1974) 57-59. It is notable that both works are linked by the fact that they both contain the Hebrew word for "light" (*or*)—a reference to enlightenment, revelation—in their titles.



twenty five who dared to explore this field.<sup>95</sup> While editions of Adret's responsa had been printed previously, none included Adret's ban on philosophical studies; the partners edition was the first to include this text. Further, following the ban, the partners appended R. Jedaiah b. Abraham Bedersi's response to Adret, his *Ketav ha-Hitnazzelut* ("apologia"). In *Ketav ha-Hitnazzelut*, Bedersi, a Spanish scholar and poet, defended philosophy as a legitimate way of understanding the universe, compatible with Judaism.<sup>96</sup>

In the lengthy epilogue to their volume of Adret's responsa, the partners wrote that their edition was based on a single manuscript contained in two dossiers.<sup>97</sup> And while they admitted the printed text went through a great deal of editing—duplicate passages were removed and citations corrected—they did not describe inserting additional material from other manuscript sources.<sup>98</sup> Given this information, it seems likely that the partners were not responsible for inserting Bedersi's *Ketav ha-Hitnazzelut* into the text of Adret's responsa. Rather, the integration of Bedersi's apology was accomplished at an earlier stage of their exemplar's textual transmission. Nonetheless, given that three other, differing collections of Adret's responsa had been printed previously, it is likely one of the reasons the partners chose to print *this* specific collection was because it contained documents of special import to the debate over the legitimacy of philosophical study in Italy.

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<sup>95</sup> Adret, *Responsa*, 74b-76a or §415-417.

<sup>96</sup> Adret, *Responsa*, 76a-85b or §418. On Bedersi, see *Encyclopedia Judaica*, s.v. "Jedaiah ben Abraham Bedersi."

<sup>97</sup> זכרה אלהינו לטובה אל המגיהים כי...בדקו לייסר מעוותים עתקו גם גברו חיל לסקל המסילה...ועל כרחם עוד השאירו עוללות כי כל משכיל יבין את זאת כי מן הנמנע הוא לתקן מאומד הדעת...ובפרט בהמצא רק העתק אחד.  
Adret, *Responsa*, 201. Contra Heller, who stated that the edition was collected from multiple exemplars, Marvin J. Heller, *The Sixteenth Century Hebrew Book: An Abridged Thesaurus* (Leiden: Brill, 2004) 239.

<sup>98</sup> Adret, *Responsa*, 201.

## ***Kabbalah***

Over two centuries after Adret's ban, early modern critics of philosophy took Adret's line of argument even further: The principles of Aristotelianism were antithetical to Jewish faith. *Kabbalah*, however, many of these scholars argued, was an indigenously Jewish form of wisdom that led its students to greater truths than could ever be uncovered through philosophy.<sup>99</sup> As was mentioned above, over the course of the sixteenth century, *kabbalah* became an increasingly popular focus of study among the Jews of Bologna, and Italy more generally.<sup>100</sup> Ariel Toaff has suggested that the partners catered to readers' interest in *kabbalah* by printing kabbalistic texts, singling out *Sefer Ḥasidim* and R. Menachem Recanati's *Piskei Halakhot*.<sup>101</sup> The reality of the partners' efforts was more complex, however.

In fact, the partners did not print any of the classic works of medieval *kabbalah*—such as the Bible commentaries of Nachmanides or the *Sefer ha-Bahir*.<sup>102</sup> The most explicit reference to *kabbalah* in their publications is found on the title-page of Recanati's *pesakim*, where the work is entitled, *Piskei Halakhot me-ha-Mekubbal Rebbeinu Menachem...* (“the legal decisions of the Kabbalist Rabbi Menechem”). Indeed, Recanati was a well-known late-thirteenth, early-four-

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<sup>99</sup> See, for example, the work of another Jew of Bologna, R. Vitale da Pisa. His *Minhat Kena'ot* was written two years after Sforzo's *Or Ammim* and, as suggested by Alessandro Guetta, was a response to the partners' publication of Bedersi's *Ketav ha-Hitnazzelut*, Alessandro Guetta, “Religious Life and Jewish Erudition in Pisa: Yehiel Nissim Da Pisa and the Crisis of Aristotelianism” in *Cultural Intermediaries: Jewish Intellectuals in Early Modern Italy*, ed. David Ruderman (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004) 103 n.7.

<sup>100</sup> An excellent example of the angst that this transvaluation provoked is found in Leon Modena's *Ari Nohem*, see Yacob Dweck, *The Scandal of Kabbalah: Leon Modena, Jewish Mysticism, Early Modern Venice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).

<sup>101</sup> Toaff, “Bologna ebraica,” 25.

<sup>102</sup> Works that fifteenth and sixteenth century Italian Jews knew and owned, Bonfil, *Rabbis and Jewish Communities*, 278.

teenth-century Italian kabbalist, one of the first to make extensive use of Zoharic texts in his writings.<sup>103</sup> However, Recanati's *pesakim* are remarkably free of references to kabbalistic texts or ideas.<sup>104</sup> The fact the partners' identified Recanati prominently as a kabbalist on their title-page, suggests that they sought to benefit from the rising prominence of *kabbalah* in Italy and to attract readers to this publication by emphasizing the author's kabbalistic pedigree—despite the fact that the text contained little *kabbalah* itself. This kind of deceptive marketing strategy was a common feature of early modern title pages.<sup>105</sup>

On the other hand, in R. Yohanan Treves' commentary on the *maḥzor*, *Kamḥa D'Avshuna*, Treves did include kabbalistic traditions and citations from the *Zohar*.<sup>106</sup> Treves included this esoterica while simultaneously professing that his commentary was meant to elucidate the “straightforward meaning” (*peshat*) of the liturgy.<sup>107</sup> The fact that Treves either played down the kabbalistic elements of his work or considered them to be synonymous with the “straightforward meaning” of the prayers further demonstrates the prominence of *kabbalah* in sixteenth-century Italian culture. Far from being either esoteric or novel, kabbalistic interpretations of Jewish prac-

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<sup>103</sup> Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah in Italy, 1280–1510* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011) 112.

<sup>104</sup> Idel, *Kabbalah in Italy*, 113; Emanuel, “Piskei R. Menachem mi'Recanati.”

<sup>105</sup> Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *The Coming of the Book: Impact of Printing, 1450-1800*, trans. David Gerard (London: Verso, 2010), 84-86; Richardson, *Printers, Writers and Readers*, 132-133. On deceptive marketing, see Helen Smith, “‘Imprinted by Simeon Such a Signe’: Reading Early Modern Imprints” in *Renaissance Paratexts*, eds. Helen Smith and Louise Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 17-33.

<sup>106</sup> See, for example, his interpretation of the sacrifices in his introduction, as well as his interpretation of the hand washing ritual, on the first page of the *maḥzor*. This was also noted by Heller, *Thesaurus of the Sixteenth Century Hebrew Book*, 251. Interestingly, the *Zohar* had yet to be printed and was only available in manuscript at this time.

<sup>107</sup> See his introduction.

tices and texts became increasingly standard fare in Jewish literature, and Treves's commentary was a part of this process.<sup>108</sup>

As for *Sefer Ḥasidim*, it is not clear whether Italian Jewish readers would have equated the ideas and practices found in the partners' edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* with the *kabbalah*—especially, the theosophical *kabbalah* of medieval Spain—which was popularized during the sixteenth century. Indeed, in the partners' edition, Haym Soloveitchik has noted that many of the distinctive, mystical ideas and customs associated with the *Ḥasidei Ashkenaz* were submerged and obscured by a wealth of far more “conventional” ethical and homiletical material.<sup>109</sup> Indeed, the edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* that the partners printed is significantly different from the more radical Parma manuscript which, for the last century, has been regarded as the primary source for understanding the mystical ideas of the German Pietists.<sup>110</sup> Rather than portray the printing of *Sefer Ḥasidim* as a dissemination of *kabbalah*, it is perhaps more precise to see the printing of *Sefer Ḥasidim* as an attempt to reclaim the traditions of medieval Ashkenaz and integrating those traditions into an Italian and Sephardic cultural framework, as well as improve the standards of religious education and spiritual life among early modern Italian Jews.

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<sup>108</sup> The literature on the popularization of *kabbalah* is extensive, see Simcha Assaf, “Le-pulmus al ha-defus sifrei kabbalah” in *Mekorot u-mehkarim* (Jerusalem: Mosad HaRav Kook, 1946) 238–246; Isaiah Tishby, “Ha-pulmus al Sefer ha-Zohar be-me’ah ha-shesh esrei b'Italia” in *Studies in Kabbalah and Its Branches: Research and Sources*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1982) 79–129; Moshe Hallamish, “Te’udah le-toldot ha-pulmus al ha-kabbalah b'Italia bereishit ha-me’ah ha-17,” *Bar Ilan Annual* 22 (1988): 179–204; Jacob Elbaum, *Petihut ve-histagrut: ha-yezirah ha-ruhanit ha-sifrutit be-Polin u-ve-arzot Ashkenaz be-shilhei ha-me’ah ha-shesh esrei* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1990) 146–149, 356–376; Boaz Huss, *Ke-zohar ha-raki’a: perakim be-hitkablut ha-Zohar u-ve-havnayat erko ha-simli* (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 2008); Yaacob Dweck, *The Scandal of Kabbalah: Leon Modena, Jewish Mysticism, Early Modern Venice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012) 61–100; Roni Weinstein, *Kabbalah and Jewish Modernity* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2016).

<sup>109</sup> Haym Soloveitchik, “Pietists and Kibbitzers,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 96, no. 1 (Winter 2006): 60.

<sup>110</sup> On the differences between these two texts, see the Introduction to this dissertation.

## Boundary Crossing Books

Above all, the partners' printing of *Sefer Ḥasidim* should be seen as an expression of the ethnic boundary crossing that was a hallmark of early modern Jewish culture. Indeed, it has become an historiographical commonplace to remark on the "interpenetration," to use David Ruderman's term, of Sephardic and Ashkenazic cultures as a result of migrations of the early modern period.<sup>111</sup> Sonne, in his assessment of the partners' publications, noted that the works they printed "indicate an integration of the Sephardic foundation and the Italian foundation"—and to this we should add the "Ashkenazic foundation" as well.<sup>112</sup> By producing editions of texts that emerged from diverse Jewish traditions, the partners sought to attract the interest of as many readers as possible on an Italian peninsula with large concentrations of Jews who traced their ancestry to other locales.<sup>113</sup> Sforzo's *Or Ammim* and the vernacular *siddur* would appeal to *Italiani* readers—Jews who saw themselves as indigenous to Italy; Yahyah's *Torah Or* and Adret's responsa would appeal to Sephardic readers; and *Sefer Ḥasidim* and their *siddur* with "*seder ma'arakhah*" would appeal to Ashkenazic readers.

Further, the partners' catalogue of titles may be fruitfully compared to the *Shulḥan Arukh*, especially in its Krakow edition of 1574. This edition of R. Joseph Caro of Safed's code of Jewish law included R. Moses Isserles of Krakow's halakhic glosses, creating the impression of an authoritative compendium of Sephardic and Ashkenazic tradition. While the reality was more

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<sup>111</sup> David B. Ruderman, *Early Modern Jewry: A New Cultural History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010) 33. The Italian peninsula, of course, had always been a crossroads, supporting communities with strong connections both northward toward Franco-Germany and westward and southward toward Iberia and North Africa, as well as its own proudly distinctive Italian identity.

<sup>112</sup> Sonne, "Jewish Le-toldot kehillat Bologna," 42, translation mine.

<sup>113</sup> Of efforts during the 1530s to produce new kinds of texts to reach diverse readerships, see Richardson, *Print Culture in Renaissance Italy*, 90-108.

complex, superficially, the *Shulhan Arukh* was a testament to what Ruderman has called the emergence of “a unified culture fusing Sephardic law with Ashkenazic custom” where ethnic identities were increasingly “muddled.”<sup>114</sup> We can think of the partners’ publications similarly. Recanati’s *Piskei Halakhot*, for example, was in fact an anthology of legal rulings from leading halakhists of medieval Germany, Austria, Provence and Catalonia.<sup>115</sup> It should be understood thus as an attempt to integrate the halakhic traditions of Ashkenaz and Sepharad by a medieval Italian scholar, repackaged for an early modern readership where those ethnic divisions were increasingly blurred.<sup>116</sup>

A second example of the partners’ muddling of traditions is evident in their Hebrew *sid-dur* of 1537.<sup>117</sup> Here, on the title page, the partners proclaimed it was “ordered according to the custom of the holy community of Rome; and we have added according to our ability.”<sup>118</sup> This statement implies that the partners sought to produce an authoritative witness to the ritual practices of the Jews of Rome—the *Italiani*—while simultaneously introducing additional material from other sources. The most visible example of this kind of “adding” is R. Eliyahu b. Men-

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<sup>114</sup> Ruderman, *Early Modern Jewry*, 100. Ruderman’s comments are based on a number of important articles by Elhanan Reiner, especially, “The Ashkenazi Elite at the Beginning of the Modern Era: Manuscript Versus Printed Book” in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewish History* 10, ed. Gershon David Hundert (London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1997) 85–98 and Joseph Davis, “The Reception of the Shulhan ‘Arukh and the Formation of Ashkenazic Jewish Identity,” *AJS Review* 26, no. 2 (2002): 252–276.

<sup>115</sup> Emanuel, “Piskei R. Menachem mi'Recanati,” 164.

<sup>116</sup> On the blurring of communal boundaries in early modern Italy, see Cooperman, “Ethnicity and Institution Building” and Kenneth R. Stow, “Ethnic Rivalry or Melting Pot: the ‘Edot’ in the Roman Ghetto,” *Judaism* 41 (Summer 1992): 286–296.

<sup>117</sup> *Tefillah: Mireshit ve’ad aḥarit ha-shanah....* (Bologna, 1537). This title is not widely available but is found in the Columbia University Rare Books collection under the call number B893.1 J55.

<sup>118</sup> כסדרן כפי מנהג ק”ק רומי ומוסיפי כאשר הסיגה ידינו.

achem's "*seder ma'arakhah*." Thus, in this liturgy, the partners popularized medieval Ashkenazic custom by welding it to established Italian tradition.

A final example of the partners integrating Sephardic and Ashkenazic traditions is *Sefer Ḥasidim* itself. *Sefer Ḥasidim* is a record of the ethical, spiritual and social teachings of Franco-German Jews in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Its descriptions of their ideas and ritual practices are embedded within evocative depictions of life in the medieval Rhineland. The text also makes occasional use of Judeo-French and Judeo-German loanwords. Like the works discussed above, the partners' printing of *Sefer Ḥasidim* can be seen as the dissemination of Franco-German traditions within an Italian milieu. Yet, while unambiguously Rhenish in origin, it is notable that the partners' edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* contains several extracts from Sephardic sources, including Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah* and R. Nissim b. Jacob of Kairouan's *Megillat Setarim*.<sup>119</sup> While these extracts are found in older manuscripts of *Sefer Ḥasidim*—and we can thus assume the partners' were not responsible for introducing them into the text—what is clear is the partners' edition cannot not be characterized as squarely an Ashkenazic work. It was, rather, a

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<sup>119</sup> For the Maimonides passages, see §19-21; for those of Nissim, see §604-606. The Maimonides passages are only found in the Bologna edition and in the manuscript sources that are most closely related to it. Haym Soloveitchik has emphasized the importance of these passages in differentiating the Bologna edition from the Parma manuscript, Haym Soloveitchik, "Piety, Pietism and German Pietism: Sefer Ḥasidim I and the Influence of Ḥasidei Ashkenaz," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 92, no. 3 (2002): 455–493. The texts from Nissim's *Megillat Setarim* are found in Parma manuscript as well.

patchwork composed of elements of diverse origins, much like Italian Jewry in the sixteenth century.<sup>120</sup>

The access to diverse sources of spiritual and halakhic authority afforded by print was both bewildering and energizing to early modern Jewish readers.<sup>121</sup> In the medieval period, while manuscripts sometimes circulated widely beyond the confines of their region of origin the physical limitations of mobility and replicability of handwritten texts reinforced localized traditions and customs. The power of printing to disseminate information widely was immediately understood by scholars. Famously, Elhanan Reiner has shown how R. Hayim b. Bezalel of Friedberg, polemicized against R. Moses Isserles' halakhic manual *Torat Ḥatat* (1559) because it “froze and rigidified” the *halakhah* and took the process of determining religious practice out of the hands of local rabbis.<sup>122</sup> At the same time, printed books exposed scholars to a range of religious precedents and concepts that was hitherto unavailable in any one location. In his colophon to *Sefer Ḥasidim*, Abraham remarked that copies of the *Sefer Ḥasidim* were exceedingly rare; they were “not found in this region as far as Jerusalem (Micah 1:9).” He believed making it

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<sup>120</sup> The notion that *Sefer Ḥasidim* (in both the partners' edition and the Parma manuscript) is a patchwork, composite text is discussed Ivan G. Marcus, “The Recensions and Structure of ‘Sefer Ḥasidim,’” *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 45 (1978): 131–153; Haym Soloveitchik, “Piety, Pietism and German Pietism: Sefer Ḥasidim I And the Influence of Ḥasidei Ashkenaz.” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 92, no. 3 (2002): 455–493; Johann Maier, “I ‘Sefer Ḥasidim’: Il manoscritto parmenese 3280 e l'edizione di bologna, 1538 - osservazioni critiche” in *Manoscritti, frammenti e libri ebraici nell'Italia dei secoli XV-XVI*, eds. Giuliano Tamani and Angelo Vivian (Rome: Carucci, 1991) 129–136. Joseph Dan rejects this understanding, “Ashkenazi Ḥasidim, 1941-1991: Was There Really a Hasidic Movement in Medieval Germany?” in *Gershom Scholem's Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism Years After: Proceedings of the Sixth International Conference on the History of Jewish Mysticism*, eds. Peter Schäfer and Joseph Dan (Tübingen: Mohr, 1992) 92-96.

<sup>121</sup> This was certainly the case among non-Jewish readers as well, see Ann M. Blair, *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information Before the Modern Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010) and chapter 2 below.

<sup>122</sup> Elchanan Reiner, “The Ashkenazi Elite at the Beginning of the Modern Era: Manuscript Versus Printed Book” in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewish History* 10 (London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1997) 87.



widely available would “bring merit to the masses” of Jews.<sup>123</sup> The printing *Sefer Ḥasidim* was, for Abraham, an attempt to popularize a work of religious authority that was largely unknown.

## Education

The partners also sought to print works that would exert a positive educational and spiritual influence on their co-religionists in Italy. This reflected broader Italian Jewish educational efforts during the sixteenth century. Among them, for instance, was the emergence of the office of “communally-appointed rabbi.” The primary responsibilities of this position involved teaching, especially of children and young adults, and regular synagogue preaching. Robert Bonfil has noted that this institution was likely modeled on the position of *marbiṣ Torah* (communal teacher and preacher) in Spain and brought to Italian soil by the Spanish exiles.<sup>124</sup> Indeed, R. David ibn Yahya of Naples—the father of Joseph b. David ibn Yahya, the author of *Torah Or*—recorded that much of his day was spent teaching the community’s youth basic Jewish texts, an activity for which he felt he was not adequately compensated.<sup>125</sup> The formalization of the office of “communally-appointed rabbi” also testifies to the increasing importance of synagogue preaching during sixteenth century. Indeed, David Ruderman has called the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the “age of the sermon,” as evinced by new prestige accorded to preachers, the practice of printing and disseminating sermons after they were delivered, and the development of a literature of

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<sup>123</sup> ולא נמצא בגליל זה עד ירושלם עיר הקדש תו"בב רק אחד כמוס היה אתי לרוב חשיבותו ויוקר ענייניו ולזכות את הרבים הוצאתיהו ובא ליד המדפיסים היקרים להדפיסו.

<sup>124</sup> Bonfil has asserted that the institution of “communally-appointed rabbi” emerged first in Verona in 1539, see Bonfil, *Rabbis and Jewish Communities*, 153-156; see also, Meir Benayahu, *Marbiṣ Torah: samkhuyotav, tafkidav ve-hetko be-mosedot ha-kehillah....* (Jerusalem: Mosad ha-Rav Kuk, 1953).

<sup>125</sup> Alexander Marx, “Glimpses of the Life of an Italian Rabbi of the First Half of the Sixteenth Century (David Ibn Yahya),” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 1 (1924): 615.

handbooks for aspiring preachers.<sup>126</sup> Preaching and printing thus went hand in hand during the sixteenth century as modes of popular religious edification.

One record of this educational effort is the partners' *maḥzor* with R. Yohanan Treves' commentary, *Kimḥa de-Avishuna*. In his introduction to the commentary, Treves urged his readers to think of prayer as sacred as an act as the public reading of scripture, perhaps even more so. A person could fulfill the commandment of reading from the Torah, even if he made an error, if he had the proper focus or intention (*kavvanah*), Treves explained. But prayer was different; in order for a person to fulfill the commandment of daily prayer, a worshipper had to have both the proper focus and not make mistakes—and to do this, he had to comprehend the meaning of words he was uttering.<sup>127</sup> This was especially difficult because, despite the fact that prayer was a fact of daily life for Jewish men, the liturgy (especially the festival services) was a patchwork of abstruse texts. Moreover, the printing process had introduced numerous “distortions” (*shibushim*) and “switches” (*ḥilufim*). Uneducated worshipers often read the prayers without “discernment” (*havanah*) and did not notice textual errors, and thus failed to fulfill their religious obligation. The purpose of his *maḥzor* and commentary, Treves explained, was to correct this state of affairs by producing as accurate a text as possible and by explaining its “straightforward

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<sup>126</sup> David B. Ruderman, introduction to *Preachers of the Italian Ghetto* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992) 3. This term seems to have come from Cecil Roth, *Jewish Life in Renaissance Italy* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1959) 35. See also, Marc Saperstein, “Italian Jewish Preaching: An Overview” in *Preachers of the Italian Ghetto*, 29, where he describes the outpouring of sermon collection printed in Italy and the Ottoman Empire during the last decades of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth century. On the significance of sermons in the Sephardic world during this period, see Joseph Hacker, “Ha-derashot ha-sephradit be-me’ah ha-16 bein sifrut le-makor histori,” *Pe’amim* 26 (1986): 108–27, especially after 113.

<sup>127</sup> Treves’s view is based on a passage in the Babylonian Talmud, Hagiga 5b and Tosafot, Avodah Zarah 22b.

meaning” (*peshat*) especially liturgical poems, which were notoriously difficult to interpret.<sup>128</sup> By producing a liturgy free of textual imperfections and by educating his co-religionists about the meaning of the prayers, Treves believed he could improve Italian Jewry’s spiritual state of affairs.

Treves’ critique of printed liturgies and his concern for Italian Jewry’s spiritual welfare is reminiscent of the later efforts of Polish rabbis to ameliorate printed errors in the liturgy by producing an “authorized daily prayerbook.” According to Stefan Reif, the project, completed in 1617 by Shabbetai Sofer of Przemyśl, came about when a coalition of Polish rabbis agreed to eliminate “non-standard Hebrew” in the liturgy and to encourage more worshipers to understand the meaning of the prayers.<sup>129</sup> Treves’ critique is also reminiscent of the views of the medieval *Hasidei Ashkenaz*. These pietists venerated the liturgy and accorded it a status akin to scripture. In his commentary on the liturgy, R. Judah he-Hasid developed a system of counting letters and words, much like the Masoretic traditions that developed around the biblical text several centuries earlier.<sup>130</sup> The purpose of this system, as Talya Fishman has explained, was to “affirm a particular version of prayer, to the exclusion of all others” and to establish an “authorized...

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<sup>128</sup> גמרא גמור שגור בפיו כן הענין במתפללים רק שפתייהם נעים בפיהם כבדו [כך] ה' ורחוק מכליותיהם. ואינם מתכוונים במבטא האותיות והתבות למשפחותיהם יצאו מן הת"בה בכונה אחרת. וקורין מה שלפניהם במחזוריהם זולת הבחנה בסדורים מהודרים בשירים ופיוטים ופזמונים עונים כאחד בראשי חדשיהם ובמועדיה'. מוטעים רקעי פח"ים ושבושים עלו כלם בדפוסיהם. כי נתחלפו אותיות בומ"ף וא"ח ה"ע ושב"א נח ושב"א נע בני הישני וחיפני חישנין לאחלופי וחסורי מחסרי והכי קתני וטח מראות עיניהם. אמנם על פי המדרש הקורא לאהרן הרץ רגלו עליהם אהבה ומעלה כאלו קראו בתפארת הקריאה המחוייבת עליהם כמו שאמרו ז"ל והדברים הולכים אחר כונת הלב ורחמנא לבא בעי זהו בקריאת התורה יש לה שבעים פנים אבל לא בתפלותיהם שצריך כונה נכונה כמו שכתוב בעמודי דולה לחתך בשפתיו ולהוציא מלה מלה כמי שמונה מעות.... ובתוכם [בשותפים] ה' נטע תורתו בלבם לישר הדורים ולשים מעקשי השבושים למשור בפי המתפללים ולתת אל פיהם מלח ותבלין ההבנה להבין אותם במקרא מפורש ושום שכל בתפלותיהם בשפה ברורה ובנעימה וקדושה את קדוש ישראל יעריצו בפיהם.

<sup>129</sup> Stefan Reif, “From Printed Prayers to the Spread of Pietistic Ones,” 231-232 and *Shabbethai Sofer and his Prayer-Book* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

<sup>130</sup> Prior to the eighth century, see *Encyclopedia Judaica*, s.v. “Masorah.”

Pietist text of prayer”—much like Treves’ *maḥzor*.<sup>131</sup> Moreover, passages in the partners’ edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* exhorted readers to cultivate the proper *kavvanah* during prayer.<sup>132</sup> What unites the efforts of the *Ḥasidei Ashkenaz*, Treves, and the rabbis of seventeenth-century Poland, was an overall concern with the religious education and spiritual welfare of their co-religionists, as well a desire to establish a standard liturgy. While the *Ḥasidei Ashkenaz* responded to the spread of prayer books in manuscript during the twelfth century, Treves and the leaders of Polish Jewry faced a parallel challenge with the advent of printing.<sup>133</sup>

A similar educational and spiritual vision can be discerned in the partners’ vernacular *siddur*, *Tefillot Latini*. According to the title-page, the initiative for its publication came from potential readers, “kind and gentle women” who “forced and persuaded” the partners to print a translation of the prayers.<sup>134</sup> In doing so, the partners hoped their *siddur* would have a positive spiritual effect: female readers “would come to know the Almighty.”<sup>135</sup> Indeed, this title should be seen as

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<sup>131</sup> Talya Fishman, “Rhineland Pietist Approaches to Prayer and the Textualization of Rabbinic Culture in Medieval Northern Europe,” *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 11 (2004) 327-328. See also, Joseph Dan, “The Emergence of Mystical Prayer” in *Studies in Jewish Mysticism*, ed. Joseph Dan and Frank Talmage (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1982) 85–120. Fishman’s larger argument about “textualization” of Jewish culture has been attacked by Haym Soloveitchik.

<sup>132</sup> See, for example, §778-779.

<sup>133</sup> In her seminal study on the cultural effects of printing, Elizabeth Eisenstein noted how printing should be seen as both a method of “standardization” and “mystification” (i.e. distortion), Eisenstein, *The Printing Press*, 78-81. While liturgy scholars acknowledge the transformative effect of printing on Jewish worship and liturgical texts, their comments are usually perfunctory and uncritical, see for example, Ismar Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy: A Comprehensive History*, trans. Raymond R. Scheindlin (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1993) 284-285 and Reif, “From Printed Prayers to the Spread of Pietistic Ones.” Much more sophisticated is, Ruth Langer, *Cursing the Christians? A History of the Birkat HaMinim* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) 102-139. However, there are no full-length studies on the effects of printing on the liturgy.

<sup>134</sup> In point of fact, Cassuto explains, the printers actually summarized and reprinted older translations of the prayers that existed in manuscript, see Cassuto, “Les traditions judéo-italiennes,” 274.

<sup>135</sup> איסינדר קוסטריטו אי פריגאטו רמולטי יינטילי דוני אי דביני קוואלי דיסידראנו די דירי ללור תפלה לטינו דיליבראי קון ליוטו די דיאו טראסלעטרי אין לטינו און סידור די טוטו לאנו אורדינטו קון אל קונטו דילי קרטי אי בין קורטו סיקונדו צי ספיררה לו דית אלטיסימו אי איסו פריגו קי מנה פרוספיריטה נילה אופירה די לי מאנו נוסטרי אי סיהא לדולציטוריני די דומדית דית נוסטרו סופרי נואי אמנ:

part of a broader trend in women's religious engagement and education among Italian Jews during the early modern period. Scholars have noted how Italian Jewish women were known to have participated in religious activities often reserved for men, including leading the obligatory daily prayers aloud (in the synagogue's women's section), wearing *tefillin* and the ritual slaughtering of animals. There are also notable examples of female scholars of rabbinic texts and of women serving as Hebrew teachers.<sup>136</sup> *Tefillot Latini* can thus be seen as male printers' response to women who wished to cultivate a deeper involvement with the synagogue rituals and to improve popular comprehension of the liturgy.<sup>137</sup>

The printing of *Sefer Hasidim* is part of this same educational agenda. The text portrays itself as a religious how-to book: "Thus Sefer Ḥasidim was written for the sake of those who fear the Lord, and those returning to their Creator with a perfect heart, that they may know and understand what is incumbent upon them to do and what they must avoid."<sup>138</sup> In his introduction, R. Abraham b. Moses ha-Cohen described the work similarly, as a guidebook for moral and spiritual instruction. Abraham wrote that in every generation God appointed pious people (*ḥasidim*) to "bestow merit upon and purify and sanctify the masses, to teach them and instruct them in the

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<sup>136</sup> See Howard Adelman's summary of the research, "Italian Jewish Women" in *Jewish Women in Historical Perspective*, ed. Judith R. Baskin (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998) 150–168 and "The Educational and Literary Activities of Jewish Women in Italy During the Renaissance and Counter-Reformation" in *Shlomo Simonsohn Jubilee Volume*, ed. Daniel Carpi (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1993) 9–24; Robert Bonfil, *Jewish Life in Renaissance Italy*, trans. Anthony Oldcorn (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994) 132–133.

<sup>137</sup> Of course, there were many Italian Jewish men whose command of Hebrew and Aramaic was such that the liturgy was inaccessible to them as well, and this title would have served their needs too. On the emergence of Jewish vernacular literature for women "and men who are like women," that is, men who could not read Hebrew, see Chava Weissler, *Voices of the Matriarchs: Listening to the Prayers of Early Modern Jewish Women* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998) 51–65. Weissler also reflects on the power relationship between men as the producers of this literature and women as the consumers.

<sup>138</sup> לכה נכתב ספר חסידים למען יראו בו יראי ה' וכל השבים לבוראם בלב שלם וידעו ויבינו מה שעליהן לעשות ומאיזה דבר צריכין לזהר  
*Sefer Ḥasidim* (Bologna, 1538) §1. The translation is Haym Soloveitchik's in "Three Themes in the Sefer Ḥasidim." *AJS Review* 1 (1976): 312.

way and manner whereby one praises and acclaims His name.” Such people set the moral and religious standards of their communities and demonstrated proper comportment. R. Judah he-Ḥasid played this role in his community and he further composed *Sefer Ḥasidim* so it might augment the Jewish people’s “persistent sanctity and purity.” Abraham went on to explain that he composed the lengthy table of contents accompanying the text in order to make the work’s moral and spiritual benefits widely accessible to readers.<sup>139</sup> He made no mention, however, of *Sefer Ḥasidim*’s esoteric, mystical content. Indeed, this is somewhat surprising given that the sixteenth century was a period of expanding interest in *kabbalah* among both scholars and lay people.<sup>140</sup> While modern scholars have portrayed the work as a record of the esoteric teachings (*Torat ha-sod*) of the *Ḥasidei Ashkenaz*, in Abraham’s characterization, *Sefer Ḥasidim* was an enduring testimony to Judah’s practical ethical and spiritual teachings—its “pearls of wisdom and the important values”—meant to uplift and inspire readers among the Jewish “masses.”<sup>141</sup>

## Conclusions

The printing of *Sefer Ḥasidim* by the partners in 1538 occurred at a propitious moment in the history of Bolognese Jewry. The arrival of migrants from Spain and elsewhere in Italy, the

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<sup>139</sup> וקראם בכל דור ודור להוכיח וליסר לעושה רשעה גם זדים. לישר ולהדריך חטאים במשפט תחת היותם לעשות עולה מועדים. ותמיד לנו הקים צדיקים וישרי יגיגנו על דורם ויהיו לפניו כמלאכיו חביבים וידידים. לזכות ולטהר ולקדש לרבים וללמדם ולהורותם דרך ואופן היות שמו מקלסים ומיחדים.... לחבר ספרים להוסיף קדושה על קדושתם ובטהרתם מתמידים. כאשר עשה באדיר הקדוש רבינו יהודה אשר ברוב חסדים איון וחדר תקן ספר מופלא....

<sup>140</sup> On the popularization of *kabbalah* during this period, see note 106. However, Soloveitchik has pointed out that the Bologna edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* included far less mystical content—the distinctive ideas of the *Ḥasidei Ashkenaz*, such as the concept of the hidden will of God (*reẓon ha-borei*) and numerology—than in other *Sefer Ḥasidim* recensions, “Piety, Pietism and German Pietism,” Haym Soloveitchik, “Pietists and Kibbitzers” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 96, no. 1 (Winter 2006): 60–64.

<sup>141</sup> רבוי תועלת פניני אמריו והמדוי החשובות והדרכים והלימודי היקר מזהב ומפז....  
See Appendix A for a full transcription of Abraham’s introduction.

burgeoning silk trade and the lively debates over philosophy and *kabbalah* created fertile soil for a Hebrew press to emerge in Bologna. That press benefited from the partners and their colleagues' commercial expertise and Jewish scholarship. Their decision to print *Sefer Ḥasidim* was emblematic of their community's expanding intellectual horizons—the integration of Jewish traditions and customs from the Italian, Sephardic and Ashkenazic sources, the exploration of new fields of knowledge—as well as longstanding concerns for religious behavior and public morality. Abraham highlighted these aspects of the text in both his introduction and his table of contents. They did not treat *Sefer Ḥasidim* as esoteric or kabbalistic, rather it was work of moral and spiritual edification designed for regular consultation, as the next chapter will make clear.

## Chapter 2

### Manuscripts, Printing and Textual Change

#### The First Printed Edition's Relationship to Extant Manuscripts

Comparing the content and structure of the partners' first printed edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* and the Parma manuscript closely, Ivan Marcus has suggested that both documents drew on shared source texts that are "now lost."<sup>1</sup> Because of this interrelationship, Marcus has also argued that it is impossible to discern which—the partners' edition or the Parma manuscript—was written first, or which was more likely to have been composed by R. Judah he-Ḥasid.

This chapter is meant to be a continuation of Marcus' comparative work, moving forward in time. Rather than trying to isolate the *ur-text* of *Sefer Ḥasidim*, however, it seeks to identify those features of the partners' edition that can be linked to the partners' textual and paratextual interventions. To do this, ideally, it would be possible to compare the partners' edition to the manuscript exemplar on which it was based—namely, the document that R. Abraham b. Moses ha-Cohen brought to the partners.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, none of the eighteen manuscripts of *Sefer Ḥasidim* are sufficiently similar to the partners' edition as a whole—in both structure and content—to conclude that one of them served as its exemplar. Nonetheless, it is possible to compare those manuscripts to the partners' edition and draw conclusions about its unique textual and paratextual features.

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<sup>1</sup> Ivan G. Marcus, "The Recensions and Structure of 'Sefer Ḥasidim'," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 45 (1978): 149-150

<sup>2</sup> See chapter one for Abraham's relationship to the partners.



From my comparative analysis, described below, it will become clear the partners made at least three innovations in their printed edition: First, they formally ascribed authorship to the book. Second, they printed a detailed table of contents to assist readers in accessing its moral and spiritual lessons. Third, they altered the text itself and removed many references to Christians or Christianity.

### **A Note on Editorial Responsibility**

The question of who was ultimately responsible for the editorial decisions manifested in the first printed edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* is especially difficult to pin down. We know, for example, that R. Abraham b. Moses ha-Cohen wrote the introduction and the colophon, as well the accompanying table of contents. However, it is not clear what role he had in preparing the text for print. The partners certainly employed other craftsmen—and blamed them for the errors that surfaced in their works.<sup>3</sup> One wonders how much autonomy these employees had. At the same time, the partners were men with significant Jewish knowledge and religious commitment. Moreover, as discussed in chapter one, it was common for the owners of early modern presses to be involved in all aspects of their printing operations. It is thus more than likely that partners themselves played a significant role in producing their edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim*.

### **Authorship**

One of the striking features of the partners' edition is R. Abraham b. Moses ha-Cohen's statement at the start of the book that "the mighty, holy R. Judah he-Ḥasid" composed *Sefer Ḥa-*

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<sup>3</sup> See chapter one, note 4.

*sidim*. This contradicts *Sefer Ḥasidim*'s own advice: Writers should be like the “sages of old” who “would not write their books in their own names.... They did not write in their books, ‘I, so-and-so son of so-and-so, wrote and composed this book,’ in order that he would not benefit from this world and damage his reward for the world to come.”<sup>4</sup> Judah avoided any reference to himself in his other works too, and some of his disciples sought to maintain this anonymity.<sup>5</sup> In *Aruḡat ha-Bosem*, a thirteenth-century commentary on liturgical poetry, for instance, R. Abraham b. Azriel used a Hebrew acronym in place of Judah's name when citing his teachings.<sup>6</sup> Perhaps following this advice, none of the *Sefer Ḥasidim* manuscripts identify Judah as *Sefer Ḥasidim*'s author.<sup>7</sup>

Not all of Judah's disciples were keen to protect the anonymity of their teacher. In his halakhic compendium, *Or Zaru'a*, R. Isaac b. Moses of Vienna cited a tradition he learned directly from Judah, that a prayer leader should be liked by his whole community.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, in his commentary on Maimonides' legal code the *Mishneh Torah*, R. Meir ha-Cohen of Rothenburg noted he had heard a tradition that Judah taught that a book that once contained “unfit” (*pasul*)

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<sup>4</sup> חכמים הראשונים לא היו כותבים ספריהם בשמם ולא היו מניחים לכתוב שמם על ספריהם... לא כתבו בספריהם אני פלוני בר פלוני כתבתי וחיברתי זה ספר כדי שלא יהנה מהעולם הזה ויפגום שכרו לעולם הבא....  
*Sefer Ḥasidim* (Bologna, 1538) §367.

<sup>5</sup> Unlike his disciple R. Eleazar Rokeah, see Ivan G. Marcus, *Piety and Society: The Jewish Pietists of Medieval Germany* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981) 138; “The Organization of the ‘Haqdamah’ and ‘Hilekhot Hasiduth’ in Eleazar of Worms’ ‘Sefer Ha-Roqeah’” *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 36 (1968): 85–94.

<sup>6</sup> The acronym was “ריה בשם ניהוח” a word play that spelled out R. Judah b. Samuel He'Hasid. His use of this acronym directly contrasts with his practice of citing all other authorities by name. Joseph Dan, *Ḥasidut Ashkenaz be-toldot ha-maḥshavah ha-yehudit*, vol. 1 (Tel Aviv: Open University of Israel, 1990) 189.

<sup>7</sup> There are other possible explanations for the absence of authorial ascription too. It may be that copyists did not know the name of the person who first composed the text they were copying.

<sup>8</sup> Isaac b. Moses, *Sefer Or Zaru'a* (Zhitomir, 1890) 1:114, Bar Ilan Responsa Database.

words should not be reused as a prayer book.<sup>9</sup> Both of these customs appear in *Sefer Ḥasidim* in significantly more complex form.<sup>10</sup> While Abraham did not give evidence for his claim that Judah wrote *Sefer Ḥasidim*, as a skilled halakhist, he would likely have known passages like these and upon reading their parallels in *Sefer Ḥasidim* could have easily come to the conclusion Judah was *Sefer Ḥasidim*'s anonymous author.<sup>11</sup>

Nonetheless, ascribing specific passages or teachings to a particular author is entirely different from ascribing a whole work to an author.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, Abraham's declaration that Judah wrote *Sefer Ḥasidim* in its entirety was nearly unprecedented in the work's textual history. There is a medieval manuscript that cites a statement by Judah's son that his father wrote portions of *Sefer Ḥasidim* just before he died. However, this tradition appears in only a single manuscript, it is unlikely it was known widely prior to the appearance of the partners' edition.<sup>13</sup>

At the same time, scholars of literature and the history of the book, have noted that prior to the early modern period, readers did not necessarily link a text's meaning and value to the

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<sup>9</sup> Meir Ha'Kohen, *Hagahot Maimoniyot, Hilkhoh avodah zarah* (Warsaw, 1888) 7:2, Bar Ilan Responsa Database.

<sup>10</sup> The first example, from *Or Zaru'a*, is found in *Sefer Ḥasidim* (Bologna), §766. *Sefer Ḥasidim* specifically refers to the case of an enemy of the prayer leader whose daughter became sick and died because of the prayer leaders's ill-intention—as well as the prayer leader's own shame. The passage is a good deal more complicated. The second example is found in *Sefer Ḥasidim* (Bologna), §249. Here too it is clear Meir's version differs from *Sefer Ḥasidim*, where the passage is contracted and the phrase “the prosecutor cannot become the defense counsel,” which originally applies to an earlier case in the passage, is applied here.

<sup>11</sup> A listing of these passages and a few others is found in Jacob Freimann, introduction to *Sefer Ḥasidim: Al pi nusah ketav ha-yad be-Parma*, ed. Jehuda Wistinetzki (Frankfurt: Vahrmann, 1924) 13.

<sup>12</sup> Even more interestingly, the first portion of the Parma manuscript, entitled “Secret of God-Fearers” (סוד יראים) appears to be ascribed to a “Samuel,” likely R. Samuel He'Hasid, Judah's father, *Sefer Ḥasidim: MS. Parma H 3280*, ed. Ivan G. Marcus (Jerusalem: Dinur Center, 1985) 1. On the ascription of this section of the manuscript to Samuel, see Marcus, *Piety and Society*, 136.

<sup>13</sup> Freimann cites a manuscript from Strasbourg where R. Moses Zaltman, Judah's son, is said to have written that his father wrote “two volumes of *Sefer Ḥasidim*” just before he died. It is unlikely this tradition was widely known, however, given that it is not cited by medieval or early modern authorities. Freimann, introduction to *Sefer Ḥasidim*, 11. *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 2 ed. s.v. “Ḥasidim, Sefer.” Dan cites MS Guenzburg 82 as his source. I've not been able to access this manuscript.

identity of its author. In the medieval world, generally, a text's authority was a reflection of its dependence on other canonical texts. The term *auctor* ("author")—one whose words possess authority—was bestowed on those writers whose works had acquired the halo of canonicity, whose words were quoted and anthologized by others over several generations. This led to a kind of cultural conservatism; literary creativity was considered a reflection of a work's kinship with an acknowledged body of texts.<sup>14</sup>

Further, the dissemination of texts in manuscript lent itself easily to collaborative and iterative forms of authorship: One writer or copyist adapting and reframing what previous generations wrote.<sup>15</sup> Scholars, such as Gerald Burns and Israel Ta-Sh'ma, have described medieval Latin and Hebrew manuscripts as "open" texts, that is, a text that is constantly susceptible to change and adaptation with each successive copying by unnamed scribes.<sup>16</sup> The collective effect of these cultural and technical constraints was to inhibit individual producers of texts from asserting ownership over and kinship with the products of their labors. Under these conditions,

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<sup>14</sup> A. J. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988) 10-11, 114. Minnis describes how this changed in the course of the thirteenth century with the popularization of Aristotle's theories of causation and the emergence of the Aristotelian prologue, where the copyist would sketch biographical details of an author's life. These medieval innovations, however, very often applied to the canonical authors of antiquity rather than non-canonical texts and recent compositions. On the medieval conception of authorship in Jewish texts, see Moshe Halbertal, *Concealment and Revelation: Esotericism in Jewish Thought and Its Philosophical Implications*, trans. Jackie Feldman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007) 39 and Daniel Abrams, *Kabbalistic Manuscripts and Textual Theory: Methodologies of Textual Scholarship and Editorial Practice in the Study of Jewish Mysticism* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2010) 366.

<sup>15</sup> This is not to say that producing a printed text was not a collaborative enterprise as this dissertation stresses—see the discussion above of the various parties involved in printing *Sefer Hasidim* in chapter one, as well as, Jeffrey A. Masten, "Baumont and/or Fletcher: Collaboration and the Interpretation of Renaissance Drama" in *The Construction of Authorship: Textual Appropriation in Law and Literature* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994) 360–381 and Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, *The Censor, the Editor, and the Text: the Catholic Church and the Shaping of the Jewish Canon in the Sixteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

<sup>16</sup> Gerald L. Burns, "The Originality of Texts in a Manuscript Culture," *Comparative Literature* 32, no. 2 (Spring 1980): 113–129, especially 125 and Israel Ta-Shma, "The 'Open' Book in Medieval Hebrew Literature: the Problem of Authorized Editions," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 73, no. 3 (Autumn 1993): 17–42. In reality, however, printed texts were unstable, perhaps as unstable as manuscripts, as Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998) 28-48.

then, medieval copyists of *Sefer Ḥasidim* may have felt no compulsion to identify the text's creator, given its seeming dependence on older, canonical traditions and the stylistic and textual features it shared with classical rabbinic texts.

Beginning with the early modern period, however, authorship underwent a conceptual transition: What was once a conservative and collective enterprise came to be centered around, in Elizabeth Eisenstein's term, "possessive individualism."<sup>17</sup> In 1969, in a well-known lecture, the theorist Michel Foucault argued that recognizably modern notions of authorship came into being as a result of the development of doctrines of private property and social discipline. An author, in the modern sense, was an autonomous creator and owner of textual "goods" that could be sold, pirated and made to stand-in for their creator. The implication of this was that texts became perpetually linked to their creators and their authors "became subject to punishment...to the extent that [their] discourses could be transgressive."<sup>18</sup>

The transition which Foucault sketched has been explored with greater historical precision by successive generations of historians and literature scholars. While they continue to debate when and why new notions of possessive authorship emerged, there is considerable agreement that the advent of printing played an important causative role. Most recently, Adrian Johns has shown that the skepticism of early modern readers toward printed texts, as a consequence of their inherent instability—that is, the opportunity for mass-deception, misinformation, heresy and piracy created by printing—led writers, printers and statesmen to develop strategies for justi-

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<sup>17</sup> Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early-Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979) 121.

<sup>18</sup> Michel Foucault, "What Is an Author?" in *The Book History Reader*, eds. David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2006) 284-285. Foucault dates this change to the period of the great revolutions "at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century" though it would be more accurate to see this as a process that began with the advent of print and continue into the nineteenth century.

ifying the credibility of printed works.<sup>19</sup> These strategies included the establishment of laws, such as copyright and printing monopolies, as well as the regulation of the social life of the print shop, the adoption of typographical standards, and even the production of apologetic narratives about the lives of printers.<sup>20</sup> Such strategies were meant to demonstrate the credibility of printed works by depicting writers and printers as people of probity and authority.<sup>21</sup>

In a similar vein, Lisa Jardine has shown that the Renaissance theologian and humanist Desiderius Erasmus, together with his printers, used printed textual and paratextual devices to craft a “self-presentation” and a “multidimensional cultural persona” meant to win authority and credibility for Erasmus’ revolutionary ideas and written works.<sup>22</sup> Erasmus saw himself as the leader of a movement that valorized human ingenuity and reason, over piety and obedience; secular logic and grammar, over scholastic philosophy and dialectic. Yet, through printed portraits of himself and by publishing his written correspondence, Erasmus presented himself to his readers

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<sup>19</sup> These are major themes in Johns, *The Nature of the Book*, see for example, 370-379. John’s argument is an explicit and, for the most part, successful challenge to Elizabeth Eisenstein, who had asserted that the quality of “fixity” and “reproducibility” printing engendered in texts led to the emergence of modern conceptions of authorship. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press*, 120-122, 239-232. The publication of Johns’ book has led to an ongoing debate, both between Johns and Eisenstein, as well as among scholars of cultural history and literature, over the merits of their arguments. This exchange has been summarized a series of articles in *American Historical Review* 107, no. 1 (February 2002): 87-128. For my part, in particular reference to this question of authorship discussed in this chapter, it is unclear to me that Eisenstein has explained the mechanism whereby textual “fixity” led to the emergence of modern forms of authorship. Johns is more successful at describing the work that was undertaken by writers, printers and statesmen to spur this conceptual transformation.

<sup>20</sup> On the paratextual strategies printers used to do this, see Natasha Glaisyer, “Calculating Credibility: Print Culture, Trust and Economic Figures in Early Eighteenth-Century England,” *Economic History Review* 60, no. 4 (2007): 685-711.

<sup>21</sup> Johns has been critiqued for over-generalizing, using his detailed study of the production of printed scientific texts in early modern England to draw conclusions about printing in general, including the printing of religious works, see Steven Mentz, “The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making by Adrian Johns,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 30, no. 4 (Spring 2000): 636-637. Yet, *Sefer Ḥasidim* serves as an important example of how his conclusions might fruitfully be applied to a religious text.

<sup>22</sup> Lisa Jardine, *Erasmus, Man of Letters: The Construction of Charisma in Print* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993) 5.

in the guise of an entirely conventional, canonical figure: Jerome, the sainted translator of the Bible. According to Jardine, Erasmus effectively used various types of printed media (made possible only recently by through the technology of print) to deploy traditional religious images in the service of undercutting the very philosophical system on which those images were based.

Johns and Jardine's arguments about the actions writers and printers undertook to win authority for printed texts and the ideas they contained resonate in connection to the partners' edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim*. The anxiety that Johns describes about the instability and unreliability of printed texts is conveyed in Abraham's colophon, where he expressed worries about how readers would receive the partners' edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim*: "Therefore," he wrote,

"I came to tell the person who searches in it that if he were to find somewhere distorted or unclear language (*lashon niftal ve-lo zah*), and apparently he sees in it an error, may he give it the benefit of the doubt. May he decide in favor of the multifarious benefit of its pearls of his words, important principles, ways and teachings more valuable than gold (Ps. 19:11), many of which are in it, to tolerate the everyday speech in the mouth of the composer (*mesader*), for he merely used the customary phraseology in decreeing (*betikkun*) the language of this book."<sup>23</sup>

In Abraham's view, the book contained errors and distortions, as well as linguistic oddities that would taint the credibility of an otherwise venerable and learned text. He expressed his hope that readers would ignore these imperfections and appreciate the book for the teachings it contained.

This apologetic colophon was clearly one strategy the partners used to convince readers of the moral and spiritual authority of an imperfect printed book. While it was certainly not un-

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<sup>23</sup> כן באתי להגיד למעיין בו כי אם ימצא אי זה לשון נפתל ולא צח ולכאורה יראה לו טעות ידינהו לכף זכות ויכריע ברבוי תועלת פניני אמריו ובמדוי החשובות והדרכים והלימודי היקרי מזהב ומפז רב אשר בו לסבול אותו הלשון המורגל בפי המסדר כי סירכיה נקט ואזיל בתקון לשון ספר.

Abraham b. Moses ha-Cohen, colophon in *Sefer Ḥasidim* (Bologna, 1538). I have translated the word "*mesader*" as "composer" because Abraham's comments seem more applicable to the writer of the text than to the compositor. Similarly, I've translated "*tikkun*" as "decree" rather than "repaired," which admittedly would be more appropriate for a compositor than a composer. But Abraham's comments about the book's word choice and his use of the phrase "in the mouth" of indicate that the subject of this passage is the author of the text, Judah, and not the print shop workers. Nonetheless, the ambiguity of these terms demonstrates the very ambiguity of the concept of authorship in the early modern period.

usual for printers to beg forgiveness for errors that crept into their products during the printing process—indeed, it became a standard trope in early modern (Jewish and non-Jewish) paratexts—such requests are especially reasonable if one assumes, following Johns, that readers were suspicious of printed texts and printers had to develop strategies for winning their trust.<sup>24</sup> This is all the more relevant for a text like *Sefer Ḥasidim* which existed in multiple versions prior to the printing of the partners’ edition and continued to circulate in manuscript long after the partners’ edition was available.<sup>25</sup> Who was to say that the partners’ edition of the text was the best, especially when it contained errors?

Moreover, *Sefer Ḥasidim* emerged from and reflected a highly specific cultural milieu, medieval Franco-Germany. By comparison, while the narrative tales contained in the *Zohar*, printed for the first time in 1558, were purportedly set in the formative period of rabbinic Judaism in first-century Palestine, the stories in *Sefer Ḥasidim* made frequent reference to life in the feudal High Middle Ages: churches, priests, nuns and nobles. In Abraham’s colophon, the “everyday speech” (*lashon murgal*) and “customary phraseology” (Aramaic: “*sirkhei nakat ve-azil*”) to which he referred were likely synonymous with the medieval German and French expressions found throughout the text.<sup>26</sup> These expressions would have confused some readers and,

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<sup>24</sup> In the partners’ edition of Sforzo’s *Or Ammim*, the partners also asked readers’ forgiveness for the errors in the text and added supplied corrections in an errata list. On errata lists, see Ann Blair, “Errata Lists and the Reader as Corrector,” in *Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies After Elizabeth L. Eisenstein*, eds. Sabrina Alcorn Baron and Eric N Lindquist, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007) 21–66; David McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order, 1450-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 139-165.

<sup>25</sup> Among the manuscripts in the collection of the Princeton University *Sefer Ḥasidim* Project are two, Vatican Library MS ebr. 285 and Bodleian Library MS Opp. 487, that date from the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries. Their existence indicates that *Sefer Ḥasidim* circulated in manuscript even as printed editions were widely available to readers. This was, of course, not at all unusual, see Yaacob Dweck, *The Scandal of Kabbalah: Leon Modena, Jewish Mysticism, Early Modern Venice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012) 32-58.

<sup>26</sup> See BT Berakhot 16a and Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim...*, s.v. “סרכא, סיר.” For an example of the use of Judeo-German in the partners’ edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim*, see §205.



like references to friars and knights, might have detracted from the work's timeless moral and spiritual character.

Abraham could help readers overcome the burden of the text's imperfections and oddities by linking it to an author of venerable pedigree and by establishing, in Jardine's words, a "cultural persona" for that author. In his introduction, Abraham not only stated that Judah was the author of *Sefer Hasidim*, but portrayed Judah as fulfilling a God-given, prophetic role, that of moral exemplar and rebuker. God, Abraham wrote, "summons them [the Jewish people] in every generation, to reprove and chastise the one who does wickedness and also evil people.... It is always incumbent upon us to appoint elders and upright people...to merit and purify and sanctify the masses, to teach them and instruct them in the way and manner whereby one praises and acclaims His Name." "The mighty, holy R. Judah he-Hasid," Abraham explains, was just such a person, who by virtue of his God-given "wisdom and understanding," as expressed in *Sefer Hasidim*, fulfilled the Divine mandate of "adding sanctity to their [the Jewish people's] ongoing sanctity and purity."<sup>27</sup>

While hardly as complex a marketing strategy as Erasmus' (in collaboration with his printer Johann Froben), Abraham's hagiographic introduction created the impression that *Sefer Hasidim* was the work of a pious, holy man, fulfilling the prophetic message of calling the Jewish people to righteousness. The fact that Abraham did not refer to the many fantastical traditions

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<sup>27</sup> This is the first paragraph of the introduction. The quotations above are bolded here:

יתברך ויתעלה הגומל חסדים לתת לעמו ישראל שרידים. וקראם בכל דור ודור להוכיח ולישר לעושה רשעה גם זדים. ולישר ולהדריך חטאים כמשפט תחת היותם לעשות עולה מועדים. ותמיד לנו הקים צדיקים וישרי יגינו על דורם ויהיו לפניו כמלאכיו חביבים וידידים. לזכות ולטהר ולקדש לרבים ללמדם ולהורותם דרך ואופן היות שמו מקלסים ומיחדים. ולשם קדשו אשר בו ברא עליונים ותחתונים מהללים ומשבחים ומודים. ותושבחותיו ופאר עיזו ונפלאותיו לבריותיו מגידים. ונוראותיו מספרים וממללים בלשון חסידים. ואף גם זאת לא עזב חסדו ואמתו עם יראיו גבורי כח משרתיו עושה דברו אשר בדורם יחידים ומיוחדים. להקים עליהם אנשים חכמים ונבונים וידועים אשר על חכמתם בחסדו הוסיף להם חכמה ובינה וחננם רוח דעת ויראת ה' לחבר ספרים להוסיף קדושה על קדושתם ובטהרתם מתמידים. כאשר עשה האדיר הקדוש רבינו יהודה החסיד אשר ברוב חסדים איזן וחקר תקן ספר מופלא אשר שם שמו בארץ ספר החסידים.

relating to Judah indicates that Judah's name and exploits were already known to potential readers.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, Eli Yassif has written that these stories acquired the status of popular folktales among medieval Ashkenazi Jews.<sup>29</sup> For Abraham, then, linking his newly printed text to a well-known figure and explaining why such a figure wrote such a work guaranteed the legitimacy and authority of his new edition.

### Table of Contents

Among the documents that testify to one of the early modern period's well-known rabbinic controversies is a letter written by R. Abraham Mintz of Padua in which he proudly declared his legal opinions were "not supported by...the canes of weaklings, on the decisions of the rabbis of indices, those seekers in notes and searchers of references."<sup>30</sup> Mintz accused his adversaries, among them our very own R. Abraham b. Moses ha-Cohen, of taking shortcuts in their research, drawing conclusions from the study of reference tools found in volumes of rabbinic texts—"indices" (lit. keys, *maftehot*), "notes" (*simanim*) and "references" (*ziyyunim*).<sup>31</sup> Mintz's

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<sup>28</sup> For a summary of these traditions, see Tamar Alexander-Frizer, *The Pious Sinner: Ethics and Aesthetics in the Medieval Hasidic Narrative* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991) 9-10.

<sup>29</sup> Eli Yassif, *The Hebrew Folktale: History, Genre and Meaning*, trans. Jacqueline S. Teitelbaum (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2009) 228, 326. For an example of how these legends entered written works, see Gedaliah ibn Yahyah, *Sefer shalshet ha-kabbalah* (Jerusalem: The Generations of the Ancients and their Lives, 1962) 123 where Yahyah cites a few of these traditions and explains that he read them in written notebooks, *kuntresim*.

<sup>30</sup> Alexander Marx, "A Jewish Cause Celebre in Sixteenth Century Italy (the Pesakim of 1519)" in *Abhandlungen Zur Erinnerung an Hirsch Peretz Chajes*, vol. 2 (Vienna: Alexander Kohut Memorial Foundation, 1933) 149-193. The quotation is on page 175, the translation is my own based on Marx's transcription: ולא נסמך על מגילות סתרים. תשובות האחרונים אם נשען בקב הקיטע או תומך במקלות הנמושות בפסקי רבני המפתחות מבקשי הסימנים ומחפשי הצינונים. This controversy is known to scholars as the "Norsa-Finzi controversy," a conflict over the relationship of rabbinic courts within Italy to each other and the power of wealthy individuals to affect their decisions. Immanuel b. Noah Raphael da Norsa of Ferrara and Abraham Raphael b. Jacob da Finzi of Bologna were business partners who had had a falling out and sued each other in their respective jurisdictions.

<sup>31</sup> Mintz was a supporter of Norsa and Abraham was a supporter of Finzi. Mintz's letter was written long before the founding of the partners printing house, sometime prior to 1519, and so Mintz could not have been referring to Cohen's work preparing reference aids to the partners' volumes.

accusation recalls a criticism sixteenth and seventeenth century Christian scholars leveled at one another, that their works relied overmuch on quotations from reference books, where, in the words of one seventeenth-century French Jesuit, “minds feeble in invention or weak in knowledge can supplement their indigence.”<sup>32</sup>

Christian scholars had occasion to rely on such reference works, because, as Ann Blair has shown, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were a period of prodigious development in this field of literature: The number, topical diversity and sheer size of reference works increased, while authors and printers developed ever more sophisticated finding aids to help readers access the vast quantities of information they contained. Adam Shear has pointed out that the history of such finding aids in Hebrew and Jewish books has yet to be thoroughly explored by historians.<sup>33</sup> A study of the table of contents in the partners’ edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* is a beginning for such an endeavor. Indeed, this table of contents—a lengthy document summarizing each of *Sefer Ḥasidim*’s 1178 pericopes, composed by R. Abraham b. Moses ha-Cohen—is emblematic of the many cultural tendencies reflected in the early modern humanist and Christian reference works and finding aids analyzed by Blair.

Blair has portrayed the growth in number and diversity of early modern reference works and their accompanying finding aids as a reflection of an early modern “stockpiling mentality.” A need to collect and categorize knowledge and render it intelligible, accessible and immune to loss. This “info-lust” was a consequence of both the trauma of the loss of Europe’s classical her-

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<sup>32</sup> Etienne Molinier quoted in Ann M. Blair, *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information Before the Modern Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010) 120.

<sup>33</sup> Adam Shear, *The Kuzari and the Shaping of Jewish Identity, 1167-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 160.

itage during the Middle Ages and the popularization of knowledge in diverse fields through print.<sup>34</sup> While finding aids, such as lists of headings and indices, were known in the Middle Ages, these tools became indispensable for navigating the early modern period's expansive and unwieldy reference titles.<sup>35</sup> They also encouraged readers to dip in and out of books in search of specific data, rather than reading from cover to cover—a practice Blair calls “consultation reading.”<sup>36</sup>

Similarly, Peter Stallybrass has demonstrated how consultation reading—or what he calls, “nonlinear reading”—could serve political or religious agendas.<sup>37</sup> Newly created indices and concordances in sixteenth-century Bibles, Stallybrass has shown, directed readers to biblical verses that affirmed specific theological positions—such as those that seemed to contradict Catholic dogma. These verses would have likely been obscured or ignored if readers had not been alerted to them through accompanying finding tools.<sup>38</sup>

Abraham's lengthy table of contents exhibits many of the hallmarks of the early modern reference works and finding aids discussed by Blair and Stallybrass. Moreover, its specifically early modern features come to light when it is compared to the only extant medieval table of contents to *Sefer Hasidim*, found in the Cambridge University Library Hebrew manuscript col-

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<sup>34</sup> Blair, *Too Much to Know*, 117, 8-9.

<sup>35</sup> On medieval indices, see Mary A. Rouse and Richard H. Rouse, “La Naissance des Index,” *Histoire de l'Édition Française* 1 (1982): 77–85.

<sup>36</sup> Blair, *Too Much to Know*, 133.

<sup>37</sup> Peter Stallybrass, “Books and Scrolls: Navigating the Bible” in *Books and Readers in Early Modern England*, eds. Jennifer Andersen and Elizabeth Sauer (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002) 44.

<sup>38</sup> Stallybrass, “Books and Scrolls,” 60.

lection.<sup>39</sup> This manuscript includes a version of *Sefer Ḥasidim* that is divided into 579 pericopes, of which the first four hundred mirror the partners' edition closely in both arrangement and content.<sup>40</sup> The table of contents—copied by the same hand as the text—is found after the scribe's colophon, and the Cambridge Library has dated the entire manuscript to thirteenth- or fourteenth-century Ashkenaz.<sup>41</sup>

The two tables of contents are similar in that both are arranged according to the sequence and numeration of the pericopes of the accompanying *Sefer Ḥasidim* text, namely there is one entry in the table of contents for each pericope of *Sefer Ḥasidim*, and each entry is preceded by a pericope number. Similarities end there, however.

Above all, the Cambridge manuscript's table of contents is briefer than Abraham's: The manuscript's table of contents encompasses eight pages, while Abraham's spans over 50. The brevity of the entries in the Cambridge manuscript appears to be influenced by spatial and visual considerations. The manuscript's pages are ruled in two columns of 36 to 40 lines with considerable empty space left for both the right and left margins, as well as a gutter between the columns. In general, each entry fills no more than a single line of text (though occasionally an entry flows into the marginal space or gutter). For this reason, entries are generally no more than ten words in length, and very often far fewer (see figure one).

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<sup>39</sup> MS Cambridge Add. 379.2 described in Stefan C. Reif, *Hebrew Manuscripts at Cambridge University Library* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 223. I was able to study this manuscript in microfilm at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America's microfilms collection, reel 155. The ink of the manuscript, as noted by the Princeton University *Sefer Ḥasidim* Project, is smudged and difficult to decipher at many points, however much of the table of contents is legible.

<sup>40</sup> The remainder parallels those of the Parma manuscript.

<sup>41</sup> Reif, *Hebrew Manuscripts*, 223.

Following Blair's taxonomy of finding aids, the Cambridge manuscript table of contents can be categorized as an "*elenchus*" or "*series titulorum*," a list of chapter headings following the order they appear in a text. Entries often recapitulate the first words or heading of a pericope. For instance, the first words of §319 (§317 in the partners' edition) are, "There are things that a man may steal which are more grievous than stealing." These words reappear without modification as the entry for the passage in the table of contents.<sup>42</sup> The entry for §37 is the first three words of the pericope—"Fear of the Lord is pure (*yirat Adonai tehorah*)"—including its slightly enlarged, centered heading, "Fear."<sup>43</sup>

Frequently, the laconic and spatially-constrained style of the Cambridge manuscript's table of contents' entries offers precious little information about the content of their associated pericopes. For instance, the entry for §87 (§88 in the partners' edition) reads simply, "The sage said," but fails to offer any more information about the passage's content (avoid mockery and nastiness). The entry for §102 reads, "It is forbidden to murder a louse"—the first words of the pericope—but fails to explain that this prohibition is in force only when the louse in question is found on one's dinner table, or to state that the passage actually includes a number of other prohibitions relating to proper conduct.<sup>44</sup>

Given its laconic style, the Cambridge manuscript's table of contents would have been most useful either to readers who knew the accompanying text of *Sefer Hasidim* well and wanted

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<sup>42</sup> יש דברים שאיש גזל והם חמורים מגזל.

<sup>43</sup> The entry for §37 in the manuscript table of contents is admittedly smudged and near-illegible. However, it was possible to make out some of its letters and deduce its content with knowledge of the first words of the passage. I have not been able to determine why some pericopes have enlarged, centered headings, while others do not.

<sup>44</sup> On the fraught question of whether one can kill a louse, especially on the Sabbath, and the medieval scientific notion of the spontaneous generation of organisms, see Ahuva Gaziel, "Spontaneous Generation in Medieval Jewish Philosophy and Theology," *History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences* 34, no. 3 (2012): 461–79.



to locate familiar passages, or to scribes who wished to check their copies against an abbreviated list of pericopes. By contrast, Abraham's table of contents reads more like a reader's notes—each entry summarizing each pericope, often in multiple sentences (see figure two).

Blair has explored how early modern humanists cultivated the practice of note-taking: Note-taking manuals counseled readers to engage in a multistep process, first marking up a text itself, then copying choice passages into a separate notebook in the order they originally appeared (either abridged or as is), and then indexing those passages according to relevant keywords.<sup>45</sup> Abraham's table of contents recalls the second step in this process—the excerpting and abridging of passages in the order they appear in the text. Yet, absent the third step (indexing and cross-referencing), it has little utility as a finding aid. Searching for a particular pericope or material on a specific theme, one would have to read through the entire table of contents (over 50 pages) in order to find what one desired. Abraham's table of contents thus did not transform *Sefer Hasidim* into a “navigable book,” in Stallybrass's term, appropriate for consultation reading.

Blair has also noted how early modern authors and printers “invested considerable creative and financial resources” producing new finding aids—tables of contents, indices, marginal notes and the like—in order to attract the interest of readers.<sup>46</sup> We can infer that Abraham, similarly, saw his table of contents as a selling-point from the fact that he highlighted its virtues in his introduction:

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<sup>45</sup> See Blair, *Too Much to Know*, 71-74, 85-93. Notes like these not only benefited the note-taker, but also formed the basis of the period's reference works which were, for all intents and purposes, anthologies of cross-referenced reading notes.

<sup>46</sup> Blair, *Too Much to Know*, 133. See also, Anthony Grafton, *The Culture of Correction in Renaissance Europe* (London: British Library, 2011) 26; Brian Richardson, *Printing, Writers and Readers in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 151.



א	כי המחבר חזר זה הספר לפי סיום חסידים שאם ידעו דברי חסידות יותר ממה שידעו היו עושים אותם	יב	לעשות רעה הרי זה נקרא חסיד כי עזיבת האדם דבר אשר תאכל וסלא למלאה כרסו ממעדני והכלי העולם לרצון השם ואם בא לידו מנוח אף כי קשה בעיניו אף אנו נמנע מעשותה זה הוא שורם ועיקר גדול מהחסידות
ב	כי ראוי לכל גבר דחיל חטאין לארור לבניהם ולתלמידהם ולכל עם ישראל אף יוכלו להשיג דרך לעשות רצון ה' יתברך ויתעלה	יג	כי עיקר היראה הוא הנסיון ומי הוא הגורם הנסיון נסים לו לאדם להקדים שלום לכל אדם ואפי' לגנאי בשוק
ג	כי בזמן שהאדם מזכיר את השם חייב לומר השם יתברך ויתעלה	יד	שורם אהבת השם וכל הדברים המיכים לה
ד	כי כל אדם המביא סם סמי' לבטלה השומעו חייב לגדותו ואם לא נראה הוא עשה עבמו בידיו	טו	שורם הענוה וכל הדברים המריכים לה
ה	חייב אדם להוכיח כל אדם ישראל אס ראהו מתעבבל באחת מרמח מכות עשה ועל אחת ממונות לא תעשה ואפי' עד חלף פעמי' ואפי' תלמיד לרב ואם אינו מוכיחו נענש הוא	טז	כי יעביר האדם עניו מראות באשה ואפילו מבערת ואפילו בגדיה וכבהמות כשהן נוקקים זה לזה
ו	אסור לו לאדם לרבר בגנותו של חברו סלא בפניו ולאמר דבר שאם היה שומע היה כועס עליו לא תכ הוכיחו בסתר ולא אבה שמוע	יז	שורם התורה
ז	שורם החסידות	יח	שורם התפלה
ח	כי אין לו לאדם להחזיק לעבמו טובה לשמוח בדברי תורה ואפילו כוונתו לשמי' כי בשמחתו קבל מקבת סכרו בעולם הזה	יט	כ"ד דברים המעבבי את התשובה הלכות תשובה
ט	יש לו לאדם להעלים עיניו אפי' בא בדרך מהסתכל באשה ואפילו פנויה הן ישראלית הן ארמית הן גדולה הן קטנה	כ	טוב לכתוב האדם כל עונותיו כדי שיוכל להתודות ואף ברמזים סלא יבינס שום אדם
י	לחנך אדם את בניו בקטנותם לפרוש מדברים שהיכר חומר כגון רכילות וכיוכא בו כי בעת זקנתו אס ילעיגו ויחרקו סן עליו בטלני סקא יהיו קשים לעונס	כא	מי מחטא בדבר אחד ורבי' נחמדים חייב לומר אני הוא כדי סלא יחשו כסרים
יא	אס אדם חטא לחברו ומתחרע ומבקס ממנו מחילה והוא מוחל לו ומעביר על מדותיו אף אס היה לאל ידו	כב	כי מי סלא הקניע את חביתו אלף אפילו בדברים חייב לפייסם כסמור בתשובה וביה כי עונות סכין אדם למקום יה והתשובה מכפרי' אבל לא סכין אדם לחבירו וחייב מוח למחול לו
		כג	החטא לרבו וכיקס ממנו מחילה ולא אבה שמוע חזר ובא אפילו מזה פעמים
		כד	אס את חבירו קודם ססאל מיתנו

Figure 2

A Page of R. Abraham b. Moses ha-Cohen's Table of Contents

Courtesy of [HebrewBooks.org](http://HebrewBooks.org)

For the sake of understanding the profit of this book and its fruits like a set table (*shulhan arukh*) prepared before all who seek the Lord and His fear, I, the insignificant, the poorest among the greats who signed [their names] at the conclusion of this book, decreed to open a doorway and a gate with a table of contents (lit. keys, *maftehot*). To this awesome book all who fear the Lord and contemplate His name will come and they will find easily all the pleasures of the King (Genesis 49:20), King of the universe, which are in it.<sup>47</sup>

Abraham, here, explains that his table of contents was meant to be more than an aid for consultation reading: It would render the verbose and discursive prose of *Sefer Hasidim* accessible. Abraham plays on the word “key” which, as in English, can refer both to a legend or reference, and a tool for opening locks. Abraham’s table of contents (literally, his keys) would unlock the religious meaning of *Sefer Hasidim* placing it before his readers like a “set table.”<sup>48</sup> In doing this, Abraham focused on the “homiletic” content of each pericope. By “homiletic,” I denote its moral and spiritual meaning, or its function as a practical guide for ethical and pious living.

Abraham’s homiletic approach to abridging and adapting the content of *Sefer Hasidim* is evident when one compares the entries in his table to the pericopes themselves, focusing on the material Abraham left out. Below, I translate one pericope, §72, and divide it into four thematic subsections:

- a. “Banish care from your mind, and pluck sorrow out of your flesh” (Ecclesiastes 11:10). This is a good virtue and more excellent than all the other virtues.
- b. When you hear a man or a woman speak about you or against you a thing which is not proper, put your fingers in your ears. For thus the sages said, “For what reason do a man’s fingers resemble pegs? For if a man hears something that is not proper, he should place his finger in his ear or you should force your earlobe into it and you should not hear anything” (BT Ketubot 5b).

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<sup>47</sup> למען הבין תועלות הספר הזה ופרותיו כשולחן ערוך ומוכן לפני כל מבקש ה' ויראתו תקנתי אני הצעיר הדל באלפי החתום בסיום הספר לפתוח פתח ושער במפתחות ולספר הנורא הזה בו יבואו כל יראי ה' וחושבי שמו וימצאו בקלות כל מעדני מלך מלכו של עולם אשר בו....

<sup>48</sup> This is a phrase of biblical origins (Psalms 23:5) whose history in post-biblical literature is worth further study.

- c. Even more so, if you hear a different woman or a man speaking about your friend, or a woman speaking about her friend, one should not reply at all, for what is it to him but trouble? Rather, block up your ears and don't hear them abusing each other. And it's good for you.
- d. Control your spirit and restrain yourself, and place in your mouth an obstacle so not to abuse your relative. Even if he speaks against your father or your mother something that is not proper, do not reply improperly, rather set his teeth on edge and say to him, "You do not speak the truth." Do not answer him anything more, neither great nor little.<sup>49</sup>

This pericope appears in nearly identical form in the Cambridge manuscript, except that the manuscript lacks all of section (a). For this reason, the corresponding entry in the Cambridge manuscript's table of contents is not the quotation from Ecclesiastes—"Banish care from your mind"—but "A decree [concerning] one who hears something bad."<sup>50</sup> This brief description contrasts with Abraham's lengthy summary in his table:

When a man hears that they say about him improper words, he does not get upset and does not reply. Rather, he puts the fingers of his hands into his ears. If he hears something about his father or his mother, he should not respond, only say, "You don't speak the truth," and he should not add [anything more].<sup>51</sup>

In this entry, Abraham focuses on the two homiletical messages in the pericope: (1) Shut your ears to slander—even going so far as to literally stuff your ears, and (2) when someone insults your parent, respond as minimally as possible.<sup>52</sup> His summary hews closely to the language of

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<sup>49</sup> והסר כעס מלבך והעב' רעה מבשרך וזו היא מדה טוב' ומעולה שבכל המדות כאשר תשמע איש או אשה מדבר עליך או כנגדך דבר שלא כהוגן הנח אצבעותיך באזניך כי כן אמרו חכמים מפני מה אצבעות של אדם משופעות כיתדות שאם ישמע אדם דבר שאינו הגון יניח את אצבעו באזנו או תכוף אליה לתוכה ואל תשמע כלל וכל שכן אם תשמע אשה או איש אחר מדב' על חברו או אשה מדברת על חברתה שאין לו להשיב כלל כי מה לו ולצרה אלא סתום אזניך ואל תשמע מחרפים זה את זה וטוב לך. ומשול ברוחך והתאפק ושים לפיך מחסום בלי להרף קרובך ואפילו ידבר על אביך או על אמך דבר שאינו הוגן לא תשיב שלא כהוגן אלא אף אתה הקהה את שניו ואמור לו אין אתה אומר אמת ולא תשיב עוד דבר לא גדול ולא קטן.

<sup>50</sup> תקנת שומע דבר רע.

<sup>51</sup> כשאדם שומע שאומרי' עליו דברי' בלתי מהוגנים שלא לכעוס ושלא להשיב אלא יניח אצבעות ידיו באזניו ואם שומע על אביו ועל אמו אל ישיב אלא יאמר אין אתה אומר אמת ולא יוסיף.

<sup>52</sup> These were important concerns for the *Hasidei Ashkenaz* whose self-understanding was tied to their experience of mockery and social alienation, see Marcus, *Piety and Society*, 92.

the pericope, though he changes the pericope's second-person imperative to a neutral third-person. Abraham leaves out section (c), perhaps because he sees it as an extension of the preceding section (b). He neither references the pericope's aggadic (non-legal) content—namely the Talmudic tradition that fingers resemble pegs so that they may be employed to stuff one's ears—nor does he not cite the biblical verse with which the pericope begins. The lack of the verse is somewhat unusual given that Abraham cites biblical verses frequently in other entries. One explanation for this absence may be that Abraham thought it related to the theme of the passage—slander—only when read in context of the pericope itself. On its face, its connection to the theme was not explicit enough to merit mention in the table.

Another example of Abraham's focus on the homiletic content of *Sefer Ḥasidim* is his entry for §60, translated below:

- a. "Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God," (Hosea 14:2).
- b. "Great is repentance which reaches the Throne of Glory" (BT Yoma 86a), therefore it [the biblical verse] says "to the Lord."
- c. It is one of the things which preceded [the creation of] the world (BT Pesahim 54a).
- d. It is equal to all the offerings, as it is said, "True sacrifices to God is [sic] a contrite spirit" (Psalms 51:19).<sup>53</sup> It does not say "sacrifice" but rather "sacrifices."
- e. "The penitent one (*ba'al ha-teshuvah*) should not fear that he has distanced himself from the degree of the righteous (*ma'alat ha-zaddikim*) because of the transgressions, the sins and the crimes that he transgressed, sinned and committed. For, the matter is not thus, rather he is loved and cherished before the Creator more than those among the righteous because he tasted sin and controlled his [evil] inclination. The sages say: 'In the place that penitents stand,

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<sup>53</sup> Here I have adapted the NJPS translation, "true sacrifice to God is a contrite spirit," making subject plural while retaining the singular verb and predicate, to make the text accord better with the Hebrew and its interpretation in the pericope.

the completely righteous do not stand (BT Berakhot 34b)'' (Abridgment of Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Repentance 7:4).<sup>54</sup>

This pericope's five thematic sections draw on a variety of biblical, rabbinic and medieval sources. A close parallel of this pericope appears as §60 in the Cambridge manuscript.<sup>55</sup> In the Cambridge manuscript table of contents, the entry for this pericope is composed of its first two words, "Return Israel." The entry in Abraham's table contents is of an entirely different character:

Great is repentance in that it reaches the Throne of Glory. The penitent should not say that he bears his great sin. Rather, he will be at the level of the righteous (*madregat ha-ẓaddikim*), for the penitent is greater than the righteous, according to what we say, "In the place that penitents stand, the completely righteous do not stand."<sup>56</sup>

Abraham's summary of §60 accurately represents the pericope's stress on the importance of repentance and the exalted status of the penitent, and is based primarily on sections (b) and (e). The most important section for Abraham is the quotation from Maimonides' Laws of Repentance (section e) which Abraham abridges, simplifying the phrase "distanced himself from the degree of the righteous" to "he bears his great sin;" and adapting "he is loved and cherished before the Creator more than those among the righteous" to "the penitent is greater than the righteous."<sup>57</sup> At

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<sup>54</sup> שובה ישראל עד ה' אלהיך גדולה התשובה שמגעת עד כסא הכבוד שנאמר עד ה' והיא מן הדברים שקדמו לעולם והיא שקולה כנגד כל הקרבנות שנאמר זבחי אלהים רוח נשברה לא נאמר זבח אלא זבחי ואל יראה לבעל התשובה שהוא מרוחק ממעלת הצדיקים מפני העונות והחטאים והפשעים אשר העוה וחטא ופשע כי אין הדבר כן אלא אהוב הוא ונחמד לפני הבורא יותר מן הצדיקים שהרי טעם את החטא וכפה את יצרו ואמרו חכמים במקום שבעלי תשובה עומדים צדיקים גמורים אינם עומדים.

<sup>55</sup> There are only subtle differences (word choice, as well as illegible words) among the passages which do not affect the meaning of the text. For our purposes, those differences are not relevant because they do not affect the way the passages are presented in the respective tables of contents.

<sup>56</sup> גדולה תשובה שמגעת עד כסא הכבוד ואל יאמר בעל התשובה כי גדול עונו מנשא ולא יהיה במדרגת הצדיקים כי גדול בעל התשובה יותר מן הצדיקים כמה דאמרינן במקו' שבעלי תשובה עומדי' צדיקי' גמורים אינם עומדים.

<sup>57</sup> I am not sure why Abraham prefers the phrase "level of the righteous (*madregat ha-ẓaddikim*)" to the original "degree of the righteous (*ma'alat ha-ẓaddikim*), but this may have been simply a case where he mentally substituted one a similar word for the original.

the same time, Abraham ignores a number of the passage's aggadic elements: He does not explain that—according to *Sefer Ḥasidim*—the scriptural basis for the statement, “Great is repentance which reaches the Throne of Glory” is Hosea 14:2—the biblical verse with which the pericope begins (section a). Further, he does not cite *Sefer Ḥasidim*'s interpretation of Psalms 51:19, that repentance (a “contrite spirit”) is equal to the sum total of all sacrificial offerings (section d). Abraham similarly leaves out traditions about the cosmological importance of repentance (section c). Abraham's lack of concern for these aggadic passages shows that he was more interested in clarifying the implications of *Sefer Ḥasidim*'s moral and spiritual teachings for his readers than representing the text as an anthology of traditions.

When pericopes contained tales, case studies and moral exempla, Abraham's entries frequently bypassed such details in favor of practical ethical guidelines. While the entry in the Cambridge manuscript's table of contents for §174 reads simply, “Two human beings,” Abraham's entry for the same pericope summarized a specific, practical lesson<sup>58</sup>:

More sin is accounted to the person who adorns (*mekashet*) himself in such a way in order to show himself pleasingly to women, who comes into transgression (*av-erah*) by their hands, than the person who does not adorn.<sup>59</sup>

In §174, this lesson is explicated by two cases (*ma'asim*).<sup>60</sup> In the first, two men who committed adultery are compared, one who “adorned himself” to provoke the attention of women and one who did not. The text asks rhetorically, “which is preferred?” meaning, who committed a less grievous sin? The text proposes that the man who adorned himself committed a more grievous

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<sup>58</sup> שני בני אדם.

<sup>59</sup> כי יותר עון יחשב למי שמקשט עצמו בזה כדי להתראו' נאה לנשי' בשבא [כך] עון לידיהם ממי שאינו מקשט.

<sup>60</sup> On the significance of *ma'asim* (cases or tales) in *Sefer Ḥasidim*, see chapter four.

sin, epitomized by the second case: that of David and Solomon. David, according to *Sefer Hasidim*, inappropriately provoked the attention of Bathsheba, while Solomon only “taught his evil inclination to desire” by maintaining a harem of 1000 wives.<sup>61</sup> Abraham left these narrative elements out of his summary, in order to highlight the moral lesson the cases taught. Had Abraham mentioned the references to David and Solomon, he risked undercutting those moral messages by popularizing the licentious exploits of two of biblical Israel’s kings.

The consequence of Abraham’s emphasis on the homiletical aspects of *Sefer Hasidim* was that many of the text’s well-known fantastical tales—including those of saints, witches, demons and ghosts—were truncated or ignored in his table. Thus, for instance, Abraham’s entry for §170 reads, “One should not steal a field since there is no rest for the thief after having committed this act.”<sup>62</sup> While this is a general summary of the ethical message of the pericope, Abraham gave short shrift to the two ghost stories in passage: One about the redemptive power of almsgiving in memory of the dead and a second about the troubles a thief experienced after death because he failed to make restitution while alive. Abraham’s summary made no reference to these stories and only highlighted the moral lesson derived from the second story in general terms.

Another entry, for §452, gives a more accurate summary of the content of its accompanying passage, but does not relate any of its more unusual details:

On the night of Hoshana Rabba, the souls exit the graves to pray. Their prayer is that they might annul death from upon all who live, and also for those who will

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<sup>61</sup> The tradition of Solomon’s 1000 wives is found in BT Bava Metzia 86b.

<sup>62</sup> שלא לגזול שדה כי הגזולו אין מנוחה לאחר באותו מעשה.

die, that they return from their ways and die an easy death, and for themselves and for others, to speedily lift the decree. Alms, fasts and prayer save from death.<sup>63</sup>

This pericope contains stories about people who overheard the souls of the dead speaking on the eve of Hoshana Rabba (the seventh day of the Festival of Sukkot). Abraham's entry does not relate the tale of how, once, two people overheard a "virgin who died before the Sabbath" wailing that she could not leave her grave to pray because she was buried without clothes. Upon hearing this, the people of the town procured clothes for her. The narrator of the tale goes on to reassure readers that even if a person's burial shroud withers, it does not prevent a person's soul from leaving its grave. Only people who are buried naked, the narrator implies, are held prisoner in their graves. Abraham, who was most interested in the moral and spiritual principles contained in *Sefer Ḥasidim*, likely considered this tale irrelevant to the pericope's homiletical message: that souls pray for the living after death and that the acts of the living affect the fate of the dead.

Mindful of Stallybrass's research on the ways finding aids color readers' reception of a text, it is worth considering how Abraham's truncating or eliminating many of the narrative elements in *Sefer Ḥasidim* may have affected readers' understanding of the work—especially those readers who read *only* his table of contents. Such readers had ready access to the practical, spiritual and ethical lessons contained in *Sefer Ḥasidim*—its homiletic content—but they would not have encountered one of the distinctive features of R. Judah he-Ḥasid's theology. According to Joseph Dan, stories like the ones discussed above, "were manifestations, or even revelations, of divine truth, which, according to [Judah's] theology, is not manifested in usual, natural phenomena. This idea made him regard stories of the supernatural as legitimate evidence of theosophic,

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<sup>63</sup> שבליל הושענא רבא יוצאות הנפשות מן הקברות להתפלל ותפלת' היא שיתבטל מיתה מעל כל החיי' וגם אותם שימותו שישובו מדרכם הרעה וימותו מיתה קלה ועל עצמן ועל אחרים למהר להסיר הדין. הצדקה והתענית והתפלה מצלת מן המיתה.



psychological or eschatological ideas.” To read the manifold stories in *Sefer Ḥasidim*, then, was to further one’s “understanding of the ways of God.”<sup>64</sup> For Judah, stories—whether tales of magic or ghosts or demons—were more than fables that taught a moral or spiritual lesson, they were evidence of “God’s essence and power revealed in the world.”<sup>65</sup> While the text of *Sefer Ḥasidim* recorded examples of those revelations for posterity, Abraham’s abridgments removed these elements and transformed *Sefer Ḥasidim* into a more conventional religious manual.

### Censorship

The two earlier sections of this chapter discuss paratextual innovations that the partners introduced into their edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim*, innovations that shaped readers’ understanding and appreciation of the work by virtue of their proximity to the text. This section deals with the partners’ direct intervention into that text through censorship. While these efforts were far more limited than those imposed by Christian censors on Hebrew titles later in the century, after the burning of the Talmud in 1553, they are evidence of how printers adapted and changed a text during the printing process in response to contemporaneous concerns.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Joseph Dan, “Rabbi Judah the Pious and Caesarius of Heisterbach: Common Motifs in Their Stories,” *Studies in Aggadah and Folk-Literature* 22 (1971): 19-20.

<sup>65</sup> Dan, “Rabbi Judah the Pious,” 27.

<sup>66</sup> On the censorship of Hebrew books, see William Popper, *The Censorship of Hebrew Books* (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1899); Isaiah Sonne, *Expurgation of Hebrew Books—the Work of Jewish Scholars: A Contribution to the History of the Censorship of Hebrew Books in Italy in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: The New York Public Library, 1943); Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, *The Censor, the Editor, and the Text*; Piet van Boxel, “Hebrew Books and Censorship in Sixteenth Century Italy,” in *Jewish Books and Their Readers Aspects of the Intellectual Life of Christians and Jews in Early Modern Europe* (Lieden: Brill, 2016) 75–99. Domenico Gerosolimitano (1555-1621), the convert censor who composed the well-known *index expurgatorius*, *Sefer ha-Zikkuk* (begun in 1596 and updated thereafter), studied the partners’ edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* and prescribed nearly 100 modifications to both Abraham’s table of contents and the text itself. Many of these involve erasing and/or replacing offensive terminology, but in several cases he prescribes eliminating full pericopes or sections of pericopes, see Gila Prebor, “‘Sefer ha-Zikkuk’ shel Dominico Yerushalmi,” *Italia* 18 (2008): 83-85.

Scholars generally agree that the systematic censoring of Hebrew books began in the 1550s as a result of Christian sovereigns' increased concern for features of Jewish literature that contradicted Christian doctrine. This was part and parcel of an expansion of surveillance and censorship during the period of the Counter-Reformation, as the Roman Church and states both Protestant and Catholic sought to control the spread of information in print.<sup>67</sup> Most accounts portray the burning of the Talmud in Italy in 1553 as a signal event: Either as a symbol of a new kind of anti-Jewish hostility (according to Kenneth Stow) or as a catalyst for new, more-subtle policies of social control (according to Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin).<sup>68</sup> Joseph Hacker, in a recent study, has emphasized the importance of the 1550s as a period when Jewish authorities (including rabbis) also began to attempt the censorship of printed Hebrew books.<sup>69</sup>

The scholarly consensus about the importance of the 1550s in the history of Hebrew press censorship has overshadowed the views of much earlier scholars, especially William Popper, who described how, long before the 1550s, Jewish printers engaged in their own censorship ef-

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<sup>67</sup> The literature on early modern censorship is voluminous, for theoretical treatments focusing on England and the Continent see Debora Shuger, *Censorship and Cultural Sensibility: The Regulation of Language in Tudor-Stuart England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013) and Annabel M. Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation: the Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), as well as, Cyndia Susan Clegg, *Press Censorship in Jacobean England* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001). On France, see Robert Darnton, *Censors at Work: How States Shaped Literature* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2015). On Italy, see Gigliola Fragnito, *La bibbia al rogo: la censura ecclesiastica e i volgarizzamenti della scrittura: 1471-1605* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1997); Gigliola Fragnito, ed. *Church, Censorship and Culture in Early Modern Italy*, trans. Adrian Belton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

<sup>68</sup> Kenneth R. Stow, "The Burning of the Talmud in 1553, in Light of Sixteenth-Century Catholic Attitudes Toward the Talmud," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme Et Renaissance* 34, no. 3 (1972): 435–459; Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, *The Censor, the Editor, and the Text*; See also Piet van Boxel, *Jewish Books in Christian Hands: Theology, Exegesis and Conversion Under Gregory XIII (1572-1585)* (Vatican: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2002) 30-37; Paul F. Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).

<sup>69</sup> Joseph R. Hacker, "Sixteenth-Century Jewish Internal Censorship of Hebrew Books" in *The Hebrew Book in Early Modern Italy*, ed. Joseph R. Hacker and Adam Shear (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011) 111; see also Louis Finkelstein, *Jewish Self-Government in the Middle Ages* (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1924) 92-95.

forts.<sup>70</sup> Popper even commented that Gershom Soncino's talmudic tractates of the 1510s "anticipated the Church by thirty or forty years" in their elimination of seemingly anti-Christian passages.<sup>71</sup> More recently, Nurit Pasternak has shown that a unique trove of Florentine Hebrew manuscripts "bear the only physical evidence yet uncovered of Hebrew codices marked by censorship...prior to the Counter-Reformation and to the era of massive purges of Hebrew texts in its wake."<sup>72</sup> Popper's and Pasternak's works are important reminders that the censorship of Hebrew books—imposed both by Jews themselves and by Christian sovereigns—began long before the burning of the Talmud—a point that the text of the partners' edition of *Sefer Hasidim* drives home.

Annabel Patterson has described censorship as a pervasive feature of early modern culture, a mode of communication that made possible "the equivocal and fragile relationship...between writers...and the holders of power, a relationship whose maintenance was crucial to all writers who aspired...to have influence, either on the shape of the national culture or more directly on the course of events."<sup>73</sup> While Patterson's analysis focuses on the literature of Elizabethan England, her conclusions may be applied to products of the early modern Hebrew presses. In order to carry out their work, the partners had to maintain a deferential relationship with the "holders of power"—the Papacy and the Christian majority among whom they resided. To do

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<sup>70</sup> William Popper, *The Censorship of Hebrew Books*, 21-29. See also David Werner Amram, *The Makers of Hebrew Books in Italy: Being Chapters in the History of the Hebrew Printing Press* (Philadelphia: Julius H. Greenstone, 1909) and R. N. N. Rabinowitz, *Ma'amar al hadpasat ha-Talmud* (Munich: A. Huber Press, 1877).

<sup>71</sup> Popper, *The Censorship of Hebrew Books*, 28.

<sup>72</sup> Nurit Pasternak, "Marchion in Hebrew Manuscripts: State Censorship in Florence, 1472" in *The Hebrew Book in Early Modern Italy*, eds. Joseph R. Hacker and Adam Shear (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011) 30.

<sup>73</sup> Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation*, 7.

this, the partners—in their papal printing privilege of 1536—committed themselves to producing only those works that did “not contain any heresies against Jesus Christ.”<sup>74</sup> With regard to *Sefer Ḥasidim* this was no easy task: the text was replete with references to Christians and Christianity that Christian readers might perceive negatively.

In analyzing the censoring of Jewish liturgical texts during the early modern period, Ruth Langer has discerned two approaches in the censors’ work: One approach favored changes that would “merely remove the elements objectionable to Christians” but at the same time did “not effectively change the inner-Jewish meaning of the text.” A second approach was more aggressive, seeking “fundamentally to transform the intent of” the text.<sup>75</sup> My analysis of the partners edition has led me to the conclusion that the partners employed both approaches: Sometimes they would replace insulting nicknames with neutral descriptors: They substituted “priest (*komer*)” for “shaved-head (*galah*),” the latter being a reference to those monks who shaved their scalps as an expression of piety (a practice called tonsuring). On the other hand, sometimes the partners’ interventions transformed the meaning of passages by replacing direct references with ambiguous terms, introducing uncertainty about the subject under discussion. While the possibility remained that the reader might interpret a passage in the way it had been written previously, the partners’ more aggressive acts of censorship expanded interpretive possibilities. Doing so gave them a measure of deniability if they were confronted with accusations of blasphemy. To paraphrase

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<sup>74</sup> Filippo Tamburini, *Ebrei, saraceni, cristiani: Vita sociale e vita religiosa dai registri della Penitenziera Apostolica (secoli XIV-XVI)* (Milan: Istituto di Propaganda Libreria, 1996) 110.

<sup>75</sup> Ruth Langer, *Cursing the Christians?: A History of the Birkat HaMinim* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) 115.

Patterson, “oblique communication” gave the partners protection but also created greater confusion as to the meaning of the text they sought to popularize.<sup>76</sup>

## Evidence

In his still-influential introduction to the 1924 edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim*, Joseph Freimann argued the Bologna edition, printed prior to the purges of Hebrew books in 1550s, was “still untouched by the censor.”<sup>77</sup> However, I was able to locate over twenty pericopes where the partners’ influence on the printed text visible.<sup>78</sup> To do this, I have compared pericopes in the partners’ edition that reference Christians or Christianity with parallels from the eighteen *Sefer Ḥasidim* manuscripts catalogued by the Princeton University Sefer Ḥasidim Project (PUSHP). Because the partners’ edition shares a great deal of text with the manuscripts, it is possible to compare parallel passages and identify subtle differences among them.<sup>79</sup>

The primary assumption undergirding this comparative project is as follows: *If a particular textual feature present in the partners’ edition is not found in parallel manuscript passages, then it is reasonable to conclude that that feature was introduced for the first time in the partners’ edition.* Of course, because the partners’ exemplar no longer exists, it is impossible to be certain whether a particular feature present in the partners’ edition but absent in the manuscripts was uniquely present in their exemplar. Nonetheless, because the number of *Sefer Ḥasidim* man-

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<sup>76</sup> Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation*, 45.

<sup>77</sup> Freimann, introduction to *Sefer Ḥasidim*, 360.

<sup>78</sup> They are, 188, 191, 193, 194, 198, 199, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 209, 219, 220, 221, 270, 280, 289, 427, 428 (mis-numbered as 429), 429, 430, 438, 804, 862, 869, 906.

<sup>79</sup> The sample of passages I studied are from throughout the partners’ *Sefer Ḥasidim* and I found correspondences to nearly all the manuscripts.

uscript witnesses available today is considerable and because there are significant similarities among them, *it is reasonable to assume that these manuscripts represent the totality of Sefer Ḥasidim recensions—and that the partners’ exemplar was not significantly different from the aggregate text of Sefer Ḥasidim that has come down to us in the available manuscripts.* I thus conclude that a particular textual feature found in the partners’ edition but not the other manuscript witnesses was likely not present in their exemplar either, and thus must have been introduced by the partners.

The parallel pericopes I studied came from all the PUSHP manuscripts, including the two manuscript groups that the PUSHP identified as most textually dissimilar from the partners edition, that is, those groupings they call the “Parma group” and the “mixed group.” Not surprisingly, the majority of parallels came from two of the largest manuscripts in the collection, the Parma manuscript and the Jewish Theological Seminary MS (formerly) Boesky 45 manuscript.<sup>80</sup>

Below, I’ve analyzed three representative examples of adaptations and substitutions the partners introduced into their edition of the text of *Sefer Ḥasidim*. To begin, §188, translated below with key phrases in bold:

- a. And one whose son has **converted from the law and went among the foreigners** (*hemir et ha-dat ve-halakh bein ha-nokhri'im*) and acted according to their deeds: His mother and father would busy themselves to remove him and to bring him into their houses and to entice him with money, so that he would return.
- b. A sage said to them: “Stop and regret! For he will do more evil, for I heard that he wants to give bad counsel to provoke and tempt his brothers and sisters to go **among the foreigners** (*lalekhet bein ha-nokhri'im*).

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<sup>80</sup> The Boesky manuscripts were on loan to JTS until 2004 when they were sold by the family at auction to an unspecified buyer. The manuscripts, including the formerly numbered MS Boesky 45, are no longer accessible to the public, Ina Cohen, research librarian at JTS, telephone message to author, March 15, 2017. A microfilm of this manuscript is available at the National Library of Israel’s Institute of Microfilmed of Hebrew Manuscripts, call number F 75736.

- c. And further he says, ‘For when I was a Jew, I ate unfit flesh (*hayah mashlikh kederah basar nevelah*).’<sup>81</sup> Better that they should leave him among the foreigners (*she-te’azvuhu bein ha-nokhri’im*) and he not cause others to transgress, and not cause them to eat forbidden foods. [One who is] joined to idols, it is better to leave him be (Hosea 4:17) than to bring him close and he will cause others to join to idols.’<sup>82</sup>

Parallels to this pericope exist in three *Sefer Hasidim* witnesses: the Parma, JTS (former) Boesky 45 and Bodleian Oppenheimer Add. 34 manuscripts.<sup>83</sup> In the manuscripts, two changes are discernible: (1) In place of the phrase “converted from the law” we find “apostatized” (*nishtammad*) and (2) in place of “among the foreigners,” a phrase repeated three times, we find “among the *goyim* (*bein ha-goyim*).” These two words—the verb *nishtammad* and the plural noun *goyim* (sing. *goy*)—had profoundly negative significances for early modern Christians.

Etymologically, the root of the verb *nishtammad* (*shin-mem-dalet*) denotes “destruction” and “cutting off.”<sup>84</sup> There is some debate about the various meanings this root carried in rabbinic

<sup>81</sup> “I ate unfit flesh” can be translated literally as “I put out my bowl for unfit flesh,” which rhymes in the original Hebrew. “Unfit flesh” refers to meat from an animal that has been slaughtered incorrectly or was not slaughtered at all (such as carrion).

<sup>82</sup> ואחד שבנו המיר את הדת והלך בין הנכרים ועשה כמעשיהן והיו אביו ואמו עסוקים להוציאו ולהביאו בביתם ולצרור לו ממון שישוב אל' ליה החכם חדלו לכם ותחרטו כי יעשה יותר ברע כי שמעתי שרוצה לעשות עצה רעה להסית ולהדיח אחיו ואחיותיו ללכת בין הנכרי' ועוד הוא אומ' כי כשהי' יהודי היה משליך בקדירה בשר נבילה מוטב שתעזבוהו בין הנכרים ולא יחטיא אחרים ולא יאכיל דברים האסורים חבור עצבים הנח לו מוטב מלקרבו ויחבר את אחרים לעצבים.

<sup>83</sup> MS Parma §183 (Wistinetzki, *Sefer Hasidim*, 72); JTS (former) MS Boesky 45 §95; Bodleian MS Opp. Add. 34 §68, [https://etc.princeton.edu/sefer\\_hasidim/manuscripts.php/](https://etc.princeton.edu/sefer_hasidim/manuscripts.php/).

<sup>84</sup> Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim....*, s.v. “שמד;” Elisheva Carlebach, *Divided Souls: Converts From Judaism in Germany, 1500-1750* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001) 12.

literature.<sup>85</sup> According to Ruth Langer, by the eleventh century, the nominal form of this verb, *meshummad*, had become a pejorative term for apostate Jews who had become Christians.<sup>86</sup> By the High Middle Ages, Langer asserts further, most halakhic authorities understood a *meshummad* as a person who had “fully apostatized” from Judaism to Christianity.<sup>87</sup> Elisheva Carlebach has noted the term’s etymology implied “the absolute loss of that soul from the Jewish community” and its passive construction drove home the insult, “no Jew...would convert out of conviction.”<sup>88</sup>

Needless to say, the term’s negative connotations provoked, in Langer’s words, “Christian sensitivity.”<sup>89</sup> In 1596, the convert censor of Hebrew books, Domenico Gerosolimitano, would write in his censorship manual *Sefer ha-Zikkuk*, “Every time the word *meshummad* is mentioned, when it does not recall something derisively, it should not be erased and one should write in its place *akum* [worshippers of the stars and constellations]. However, if it is recalled derisively it

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<sup>85</sup> Compare Chaim Milikowsky—who argues, “The *meshummad* is one who transgresses the commandments, not because it is not in his power to stand up to the temptation, but rather because he rejects them. In rabbinic literature the meaning of *meshummad* is not one who converts from Judaism to another religion, rather one who renounces Judaism,” Chaim Milikowsky, “Gehenom u-poshei yisrael al pi ‘Seder Olam,’” *Tarbiz* 55, no. 3 (1986): 332, my translation—to Solomon Zeitlin—“A Jew who was forced to adopt another religion was called משומר.... Hence until the time of the Hadrianic persecutions an apostate was called מומר. After this period when the persecutions against the Jews...began...a Jew who was forced to adopt another religion was called משומר signifying that he had to adopt another religion because of the threat of destruction,” Solomon Zeitlin, “Mumar and Meshumad,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 54, no. 1 (July 1963): 86. Ruth Langer, who provides the most detailed treatment, acknowledges, that rabbinic texts tend to “struggle to differentiate among the various categories of marginal people in their world,” Langer, *Cursing the Christians*, 52, the *meshummad* among them.

<sup>86</sup> Langer, *Cursing the Christians*, 48. This was, of course, a not an uncommon occurrence in R. Judah he-Ḥasid’s time. On conversion and apostasy in the eleventh century, see Robert Chazan, *European Jewry and the First Crusade* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996) 99-136; Ephraim Kanarfogel, *Peering Through the Lattices: Mystical, Magical, and Pietistic Dimensions in the Tosafist Period* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2000) 234; David Malkiel, *Reconstructing Ashkenaz: The Human Face of Franco-German Jewry, 1000-1250* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008) 114-147.

<sup>87</sup> Langer, *Cursing the Christians*, 77.

<sup>88</sup> Elisheva Carlebach, *Divided Souls: Converts From Judaism in Germany, 1500-1750* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001) 244 n. 3.

<sup>89</sup> Langer, *Cursing the Christians*, 45.



should be erased completely.”<sup>90</sup> The partners, on the other hand, in the case of the pericope under discussion, determined to substitute the expression “*hemir et ha-dat*” whose root (*mem-vav-resh*) denotes “exchange” or “change.” This expression was, as is clear in the translation, a more neutral turn of phrase and Jewish readers understood it as such since antiquity.<sup>91</sup>

Similarly, while in the Bible, the noun *goy* was generic term for “nation,” the Children of Israel included, it took on profoundly negative connotation during the rabbinic period and beyond, coming to refer exclusively to non-Jews, both individuals and as a group. According to Ishay Rosen-Zvi and Adi Ophir, this new form of *goy* existed in “two different guises: first the *Goy* is the one who does not stand before the law and...is a constitutive condition and external boundary of the halakhic discourse. Second, the *Goy* is an Other with whom the Jew is inevitably and commonly engaged. Commerce, communication and other various forms of mingling with them must be regulated, and, as such, the *Goy* is often degraded and presented as less than human.”<sup>92</sup> Interestingly, the partners replaced *goyim* with another word which, in both rabbinic and later literature, referred exclusively to non-Jews and possessed a negative connotation, “foreigners” (*nokhri'im*, sing. *nokhri*). According to Rosen-Zvi and Ophir, *goy* and *nokhri* were “completely interchangeable in rabbinic literature.”<sup>93</sup> Closer to our period, Domenico equated the terms when he wrote, the “names *goy*, *goyim*, *nokhri*, *nokhrit*, if understood as implying any dis-

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<sup>90</sup> My translation according to Prebor’s transcription of MS Vatican 273, Prebor, “Sepher Ha-Zikkuk,” 53. See also, Raz-Krakotzkin, *The Censor, the Editor and the Text*, 121-122.

<sup>91</sup> See Langer, *Cursing the Christians*, 98.

<sup>92</sup> Ishay Rosen-Zvi and Adi Ophir, “Goy: Toward a Genealogy,” *Diné Israel* 28 (2011): 120.

<sup>93</sup> Rosen-Zvi and Ophir, “Goy,” 69.

grace, slander and insult to that very *goy*, it should be erased, and in its place [written] *akum*.”<sup>94</sup>

Judging from their use of *nokhri*, however, the partners seemed to have considered it less pejorative than its more controversial alternative. Perhaps this was because readers could understand *nokhri* literally, referring to anyone who was alien or foreign, and thus the term retained a certain ambiguity.

Another example of the partners’ efforts is §429, translated below, about Christian books and clergy:<sup>95</sup>

- a. If there are **priests’ books** (*sifrei komerim*) which have in them prayer to a foreign deity (*tefillah le-avodah zarah*) and they were erased, do not write on them [i.e. reuse them] even as a letter or register of a pledge.<sup>96</sup>
- b. And if a man has bindings of **their books** (*sifreihem*), do not bind them to Jewish books.
- c. If there is a Bible that a **sectarian** (*min*) wrote and didn’t inscribe it with his name or the name of a foreign deity (*shem avodah zarah*) or the name of a holy thing (*kadesh*), don’t store it with Jewish books (i.e. books written by Jews), for “For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous” (Psalms 125:3).
- d. If there is a **sectarian** (*min*) who wants to make a hymn to a foreign deity (*piyyut le-avodah zarah*) or a **foreigner** (*nokhri*) wants to make [a poem in honor of] a sin (*le’averah*) and he says to a Jew, “Sing me a pleasant melody with which praise your God.” Don’t sing to him, so that [his transgression] will not occur because of you.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> My translation according to Prebor’s transcription of MS Vatican 273, “Sefer Ha-Zikkuk,” 53. See also, Raz-Krakotzkin, *The Censor, the Editor and the Text*, 121. The Hebrew acronym “*akum*” can be translated as “worshippers of the stars and constellations.”

<sup>95</sup> Anxieties about the use and reuse of Christian paraphernalia and the need to aggressively differentiate from Christians and Christianity are essential to the worldview of the *Hasidei Ashkenaz*, see Jacob Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance: Studies in Jewish-Gentile Relations in Medieval and Modern Times* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961) 95-99.

<sup>96</sup> On the practice of reusing book bindings, see Andreas Lehnardt and Judith Olszowy-Schlanger, eds. *Books Within Books: New Discoveries in Old Book Bindings* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

<sup>97</sup> אם ספרי כומריי' שיש בהם תפלה לע"ז ונמחקו לא יכתוב עליהם אפילו אגרת או כתב על משכון ואם יש טבלאות של ספריהם לאדם אל יקשרם לספרי ישראל. אם יש כ"ד ספרים שכתבו מין ולא הזכיר בו שם ע"ז ולא שם קדש לא יצניענו עם שום ספרי ישראל כי לא ינוח שבט הרשע על גורל הצדיקים אם יש מין שרוצה לעשות פיוט לע"ז או נכרי שרוצה לעשות לעבירה ואומר ליהודי אומר לי נגון נעים שאתם משבחים בו לאלהיכם אל יאמר לו שלא יהא על ידו.

Parallels to this pericope exist in the Parma, JTS (former) Boesky 45 and Cambridge University Add. 379 manuscripts.<sup>98</sup> Interestingly, the version of this pericope in the Boesky manuscript was censored and several words were covered over with ink, but that ink has faded and it is now possible to read the original script. Comparing the partners' text to the three manuscript witnesses, we can discern that the partners made five substitutions: (1) "priest's books" replaced "shaved-head's books (*sifrei galaḥim*);" (2) "their books" replaced "unfit books (*sifrei pasulim*);" (3) "heretic" replaced "shaved-head or priest (*galaḥ o'komer*)" in the first instance, and "heretic" replaced "shaved-head" in the second instance; and (5) "foreigner" replaced "goy."

Once again, the partners substituted more neutral alternatives for terms that Christians perceived as disparaging. In section (a), the partners replaced the manuscripts' "shaved-head (*galaḥ*)" with "priest (*komer*)," a neutral title in place of a pejorative descriptor.<sup>99</sup> In section (b), the partners creatively employed the possessive pronominal suffix "their" (*—hem*) in place of the pejorative adjective "unfit" in the phrase "unfit books (*sifrei pasulim*)." This substitution was more aggressive than earlier examples because it substantially altered the meaning of the sentence: The original formulation included both a prohibition on the reuse of Christian book-bindings by Jews and a condemnation of those Christian books. The word *pasul* (unfit) had a strong pejorative connotation, used both in the Bible and in rabbinic literature for objects that are ritually impure or unfit.<sup>100</sup> In reformulating the sentence, the partners eliminated the condemnatory element while retaining the prohibition.

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<sup>98</sup> MS Parma §1348 (Wistinetzki, *Sefer Hasidim*, 332); (former) MS Boesky 45 §549-550; Cambridge University Add. 379 §431, see [https://etc.princeton.edu/sefer\\_hasidim/manuscripts.php/](https://etc.princeton.edu/sefer_hasidim/manuscripts.php/).

<sup>99</sup> *Milon Even-Shoshan*, s.v. "גלח."

<sup>100</sup> See Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim...*, s.v. "פסול" and the examples cited therein.

Finally, in sections (c) and (d), we encounter, once again, a more aggressive kind of censorship: The partners substituted the word *min* for two disparaging references to Catholic clergymen. The term *min* had a long and controversial history. While it could be translated literally as “kinds” or “species,” it was used in rabbinic literature to refer to schismatic groups, including atheists, apostates and Christians. According to Langer, in medieval Europe, the term increasingly—but not exclusively—became synonymous with Christians, especially, in R. Judah he-Ḥasid’s circle. In his commentary on the Talmud, R. Solomon b. Isaac (Rashi) was even more specific: In some cases, he glossed *min* as semantically equivalent to *galaḥ*.<sup>101</sup> By the thirteenth century, Christian scholars were aware of this linkage and believed *min* was a word of opprobrium.<sup>102</sup> It is thus not surprising that in his guide for censors, Domenico wrote that all instances of it should be erased.<sup>103</sup>

We can speculate that the partners substituted *min* for *galaḥ* in this pericope in order to introduce ambiguity. Despite its fraught history, *min* had a much broader semantic range than *galaḥ*. In the manuscript versions of this pericope, the passage prohibited certain kinds of exchanges with a very specific group of people: Catholic monks. However, by substituting *min* for *galaḥ*, the prohibition now encompassed exchanges with an undefined group that might refer to many different kinds of people: heretics, apostates, Christian laymen and clergy too. By choosing a word whose meaning was difficult to pin down, the partners encouraged their readers to engage in, what Patterson has called, the “hermeneutics of censorship,” asking them to work out for

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<sup>101</sup> Langer, *Cursing the Christians?*, 70-78. For Rashi’s gloss, see BT Sanhedrin 100b.

<sup>102</sup> Langer, *Cursing the Christians?*, 84-93.

<sup>103</sup> Prebor, “Sefer ha-Zikkuk,” 53.

themselves to whom the prohibition applied.<sup>104</sup> Readers might very well continue to interpret the term as a reference to Christians, or more specifically Catholic monastics, but such an identification was not entirely inevitable.

Interestingly, in this and other pericopes, the partners did not change one controversial expression, the expression *avodah zarah* (abbreviated with the Hebrew letters *ayin-zayin*) translated here as “foreign deity” but also frequently translated as “foreign worship” or “idolatry.” While in rabbinic literature, this concept referred to pagan ritual practices and idols, by the Middle Ages, it stood for Christian ritual practices too.<sup>105</sup> The expression thus possessed within itself an essential semiotic ambiguity, one that troubled Domenico enough to encourage Christian censors to replace the expression with the more explicit locution “worshippers of the stars and constellations,” abbreviated with the Hebrew letters *aleph-khaf-mem*.<sup>106</sup> Yet, it may be that the partners chose to leave the references to *avodah zarah* as they were because its inherent ambiguity allowed their readers to determine the focus of the passages for themselves. In an era prior to the formal establishment of systematic Hebrew press censorship by Christian sovereigns, when Jewish printers themselves weeded out problematic words and phrases from their titles, we can speculate that the partners relied on this ambiguity to protect them from the suspicion of their rulers.

The partners made even more dramatic changes to another passage, §427, translated below:

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<sup>104</sup> Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation*, 40.

<sup>105</sup> On the history of this term both in rabbinic literature and the medieval period, Moshe Halbertal and Avishai Margalit, *Idolatry*, trans. Naomi Goldblum (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992) 3-4, 202-213.

<sup>106</sup> Prebor, “Sefer ha-Zikkuk,” 53 rule 1.

- a. It is written, “Make no mention of the names of other gods; they shall not be heard on your lips” (Exodus 23:13) and it is joined to [the verse], “Three times a year you shall hold a festival for Me” (Exodus 23:14). What does one deduce from them? To say to you that a Jew will not say to a **foreigner** (*nokhri*), “I will loan you until the day of some [non-Jewish] festival of a foreign deity (*eid shel avodah zarah*) or until the day of that holy thing.” Rather say, “until so many weeks,” as it is written, “Make no mention of the name of other gods,” and [it uses the expression] “make no mention” [to mean] cause others to mention them.
- b. You shall not swear to others by their names, and it is written, “You will call [Me] Ishi, And no more will you call Me Baali. For I will remove the names of the Baalim from her mouth, And they shall nevermore be mentioned by name” (Hosea 2:18-19). Even the name of their festival (*eidam*), which is called Michael, a Jew should not mention.
- c. Don’t say to a **foreigner** (*nokhri*), “By the faith that you have in your God” and don’t say, “I swear to you **by your faith**.”
- d. And don’t say to a convert (*ger*) the name of the foreign deity (*shem avodah zarah*), even to mock it, “Their names shall not be mentioned.” And don’t swear by his Judaism.
- e. A man who wants to swear to a *goy* should not say, “I will swear by his God falsely,” even this is not done.
- f. A man should not think, “I will make a disgrace of a foreign deity (*avodah zarah*), I will urinate on it or defecate [on it] **since they were of flesh like this** (*she-hayu le-basar kakh*).”
- g. If the *goy* says, “Our God” or “May our Lord lengthen your (your days)” or “bring you success” or “be with you,” a Jew should not answer, “Amen,” for his intention is for his God. But if he says, “Your God” or “May your Lord bring you success,” then he may answer after him, “amen.”<sup>107</sup>

Parallels to this passage exist in the same manuscripts as the pericope above—the Parma, JTS (former) Boesky 45 and Cambridge University Add. 379 manuscripts—and the partners’ concerns are similar.<sup>108</sup> Once again, they substituted “foreigner” (*nokhri*) for *goy* and once again

<sup>107</sup> כתיב ושם אלהים אחרים לא תזכירו לא ישמע על פיך וסמך ליה שלש רגלים תחוג לי בשנה למה הקישן לומר לך שלא יאמר ישראל **לנכרי** אני אלוה לך עד יום איד של ע"ז פלוני ועד יום של אותו קדש אלא יאמר עד כך וכך שבועי דכתיב ושם אלהי אחר' לא תזכירו ותזכרו שתגרמו לאחרי' להזכירם ולא תשביעו אחרים בשמם וכתיב ולא תקראי לי עוד בעלי והסירותי את שמות הבעלים מפיה ולא יזכרו עוד בשמם ואפילו שם אידם שקורים מיכאל לא יזכור ישראל. ולא יאמר **לנכרי** באמוני שיש לאלהיך ולא יאמ' אני משביעך על **אמונתך** ולא יאמ' לגר שם ע"ז אפי' להתלוצץ בה ולא יזכיר בשמם ולא ישבע ביהדות שלו ולא יאמר אדם כשהוא רוצה לישבע לגוי אשבע לו באלהותו לשקר גם זה לא יעשה ואל יחשוב אדם אעשה בזוי לע"ז ואשתין עליו או אעשה צואה כיון **שהיו לבשר כך** אם יאמר הגוי אלהינו או אדונינו יעריך או יצילך או יהיה עמך אל יענה היהודי אמן כי כונתו על אלוה שלו אבל אם יאמר אלהיך או אדונך יצילך אז יענה אחריו אמן.

<sup>108</sup> MSS Parma §1348, (former) Boesky 45 §549-550 and Cambridge University Add. 379 §428.

they did not replace the phrase “foreign deity” (*avodah zarah*), even when it was linked to another controversial term “festival” (*eid*), which early modern censors regularly erased or crossed out. In his censorship guidelines, Domenico called this term the “language of revilement” (*lashon herpah*) and recommend that censors “completely erase it.”<sup>109</sup> However, the partners evidently believed that it was not controversial, perhaps because in the Talmud it was frequently used to denote idolatrous festivals.<sup>110</sup>

At the same time, the partners made two substantive interventions in this pericope which significantly changed its meaning. First, they removed a direct reference to Christianity in section (c). In the manuscript parallels, this section reads:

Do not say to a goy, “By the faith that you have in your God” and don’t say to him, “By your Christianity (*auf tin christianheit*).”<sup>111</sup>

This explicit reference to Christianity in Judeo-German—easily understandable to anyone who could sound out the Hebrew characters—would no doubt would have stoked controversy. For this expression, the partners substituted the far more ambiguous locution, “by your faith.” Once again, they replaced a direct reference to Christianity with a phrase that could be said by a person of any religion.

The partners adapted section (g) is even more dramatically. This section describes the case of the man who imagines disgracing a foreign deity (*avodah zarah*) by relieving himself

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<sup>109</sup> Prebor, “Sefer ha-Zikkuk,” 54 rule 17, my translation.

<sup>110</sup> Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim*...., s.v. “אִיד” and BT Avodah Zarah 2a.

<sup>111</sup> ולא יאמר לגוי באמונה שיש לאלהיך ולא יאמר לו אף טין כרישטנהייט  
This phrase is extant in only one manuscript—the MS Parma—and it has been covered over with censor’s ink in both MS (former) Boesky and MS Cambridge Add. 379. However, given the rest of the passages are the same in both these passages, it is likely they contained the controversial phrase as well. I express my gratitude to Jessica Kirzane for helping me parse this phrase and translate it accurately.

upon it. (Here, the phrase *avodah zarah* clearly refers, not to the deity itself, but to the image of the deity—an icon or an idol.) The text of the manuscripts is substantively different, however. In them, the man says:

I will make a disgrace of a foreign deity, I will urinate on it or defecate [on it] since **they [its adherents] would uncover themselves and relieve themselves thusly** (*kevan she-hayu osim le-pe'or kakh*).<sup>112</sup>

The man uses a verb, *pe'or*, which, according to rabbinic tradition, refers to these peculiar forms of worship.<sup>113</sup> Given the ambiguity of the object of these rituals, *avodah zarah*, the man might be describing the practices of pagans or Christians. Christians would have certainly taken offense to such a characterization. In this case, the partners eliminated the possibility that readers might interpret the passage in this way and eliminated any reference to other people's ritual practices.

It is interesting to note that in the pericope above, two instances of the word *goy* remained in the printed text. Indeed, the partners did not substitute *nokhri* for every instance of *goy* in their edition. Indeed, the process of combing through texts and replacing or eliminating objectionable material was tedious. As many scholars have pointed out, early modern censorship was hardly systematic or comprehensive. In Debora Shuger's words, "in practice, censorship tended to be a haphazard affair."<sup>114</sup> Or, in the context of the censorship of Hebrew books later in the century, Gila Prebor has noted in her study of Domenico's work, that very often, realities failed to live up to Domenico's intentions and problematic terms and concepts frequently slipped through.<sup>115</sup> This was certainly the case for the partners—even when they modified pericopes sig-

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<sup>112</sup> ואשתין עליו או אעשה צואה כיון שהיו עושין לפעור כך

<sup>113</sup> See M Sanhedrin 7:6 and BT Sanhedrin 106a.

<sup>114</sup> Shuger, *Censorship and Cultural Sensibility*, 2.

<sup>115</sup> Prebor, "Sefer ha-Zikkuk," 21.



nificantly, as in the pericope above, controversial words and phrases remained. While no evidence exists to explain why the partners' stopped printing books in 1540, it is tempting to speculate that the presence of controversial words and phrases in a publication like *Sefer Ḥasidim* caught the attention of Papal authorities who revoked their printing privilege as a punishment.

## Conclusion

Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin has argued that censorship went “hand-in-hand” with the printing of Hebrew books during the late-sixteenth century in early modern Italy.<sup>116</sup> From this study of the partners' edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim*, it's clear that this process began earlier, prior to the institutionalization of Hebrew press censorship in the aftermath of the burning of the Talmud in 1553. Censorship was one of the tools the partners employed to fundamentally transform *Sefer Ḥasidim* into a printed book, along with ascribing authorship to the work and composing a table of contents. Each of these innovations changed the way readers understood the text as a religious manual—at times constraining and at times expanding the possible interpretations it might generate.

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<sup>116</sup> Raz-Krakotzkin, *The Censor, the Editor, and the Text*, 15.

**Part 2**

**Ambrosius Froben**

**and the Second Printed Edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim***

## Chapter 3

### Ambrosius Froben of Basel and his Hebrew Print Shop

The second printed edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* appeared in 1581, four decades after the first edition. It was produced by Ambrosius Froben (1537–1602) in the city of Basel. Froben was a printer, mainly, of Hebrew books for Jews.<sup>1</sup> A Christian, he resided in a city that had, since 1397, prohibited Jewish residents.<sup>2</sup> One unavoidable question, then, is whether and how this context shaped Froben’s edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim*. In other words, does a Hebrew book intended for Jewish readers, printed in a Christian-owned print shop, differ from one printed in a Jewish-owned print shop?

Further, the intervening years between the printing of the first and second edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* witnessed dramatic events in the history of Hebrew books—from the condemnation and burning of the Talmud by the Roman Catholic Church to the proliferation of printed titles for Christian Hebraists.<sup>3</sup> Does the second edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* reveal the imprint of these events in any discernible way? Perhaps Froben’s most famous (or infamous) publication was a censored edition of the Babylonian Talmud, released between 1578 and 1580. How did this work compare to *Sefer Ḥasidim*?

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<sup>1</sup> Ambrosius Froben also printed Yiddish works in Hebrew characters, see below.

<sup>2</sup> On this prohibition, see Achilles Nordmann, “Geschichte der Juden in Basel Seit dem Ende der Zweiten Gemeinde bis zur Einführung der Glaubens- und Gewissensfreiheit: 1397-1875,” *Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 13 (1914): 28; Stephen G. Burnett, *From Christian Hebraism to Jewish Studies: Johannes Buxtorf (1564-1629) and Hebrew Learning in the Seventeenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1996) 41; “Johannes Buxtorf I and the Circumcision Incident of 1619,” *Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 89 (1989): 136.

<sup>3</sup> See below for sources on these issues.

The next three chapters delve into these questions and others through a close reading of Froben's edition of *Sefer Hasidim*, with comparisons to the partners' edition. Using archival sources and evidence from Froben's other printed titles, chapter three situates Froben's edition in its late-sixteenth century context. It paints a portrait of the people responsible for producing it, as well as contemporaneous political, social and religious phenomena that shaped the Hebrew book business during the years following the appearance of the first printed edition.

Chapter four provides an overview of the structure and unique paratextual features of Froben's *Sefer Hasidim*. Through a close reading of its paratexts, it shines light on why Froben sought to reprint *Sefer Hasidim* forty years after the first edition's appearance, and how Froben and his team—especially R. Jacob Luzzatto—sought to condition readers' understanding of the text. Ultimately, I argue, the second printed edition of *Sefer Hasidim* was Froben's and his editors' attempt to address the unique philosophical and religious preoccupations of the late-sixteenth century and re-conceptualize *Sefer Hasidim* as a classic, canonical text.

Chapter five focuses exclusively on the text of *Sefer Hasidim* in Froben's edition. It begins by describing how Froben and his team used the partners' first edition as their exemplar and adapted the text in highly visible and significant ways: primarily through emendation, censorship and the addition of explanatory glosses. This chapter shows how, in the aftermath of the Talmud burning in 1553, Froben's editors employed different techniques of censorship that shaped readers' interpretation of the text. The chapter also shows how Froben's editors sought to make the wisdom of *Sefer Hasidim* more accessible to Jewish students.

As a whole, these chapters demonstrate, once again, that Hebrew printing was not merely an act of mechanical reproduction but a process of creative modification, adaptation and interpre-

tation. Reprinting an older text, in other words, was a form of re-creation: Through it, Froben and his team imposed their particular point of view and historical circumstances on the text, fashioning it in their own image.

## Basel

Located on the Rhine—at the crossroads of France, the Holy Roman Empire and the Italian peninsula—early modern Basel was a center of trade and scholarship. Its first print shop began producing books in 1468 (only a decade after Gutenberg’s Bible appeared) and the city soon became known across Europe for its academic and religious publications.<sup>4</sup> These specialties resulted from a close collaboration of scholars at the city’s university (founded in 1460) and printers.<sup>5</sup> Catering to these scholars’ interest in Hebrew literature, especially the Bible, Basel also became one of the foremost centers of Hebrew printing in the sixteenth century.<sup>6</sup>

Sixteenth-century Basel was also the site of an ongoing debate over the reform of Christianity. While the city officially broke with the Roman Church in 1529—a move led by professor, preacher and book corrector Johannes Oecolampadius—Stephen G. Burnett has noted that the Basel town council and the university attempted “to maintain a less dogmatic preconfessional

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<sup>4</sup> According to the Universal Short Title Catalogue, the first book printed at Basel was a Latin Bible printed by Berthold Ruppel in 1468. “Basel, home to a distinguished university and a renowned group of humanist scholars, published mostly for these academic and ecclesiastical markets,” Andrew Pettegree, *The Book in the Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010) 36, and 30-36 more generally.

<sup>5</sup> Earle Hilgert, “Johann Froben and the Basel University Scholars, 1513-1523,” *Library Quarterly* 41, no. 2 (April 1971): 141–69.

<sup>6</sup> Hilgert, “Johann Froben,” 151, on Wolfgang Capito’s influence in this area, as well as Stephen G. Burnett, “German Jewish Printing in the Reformation Era (1530-1633)” in *Jews, Judaism, and the Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Germany*, eds. Dean Philip Bell and Stephen G. Burnett (Leiden: Brill, 2006) 510.

form of Protestantism from the early 1550's [sic]." As a consequence, Basel's presses continued to supply books to Catholic Italy long after the city sided with the Protestants.<sup>7</sup>

### **Johann and Heironymous Froben**

Ambrosius Froben's grandfather was the printer Johann Froben (c. 1460-1527) who is largely known for his editions of humanistic and religious texts (including Luther's works) and for his close collaboration with Desiderius Erasmus during the second decade of the sixteenth century.<sup>8</sup> Johann Froben also printed over twenty titles containing varying amounts of Hebrew, many in collaboration with the Protestant Hebraist Sebastian Münster.<sup>9</sup> These works were, of course, intended for Christian readers. Upon Johann's death, his son Hieronymus and his son-in-law Nicolaus Episcopius took over the press' operations and continued to print a similar catalogue of titles. They attempted to expand their reach to Jewish readers by requesting permission from the Basel town council to print the Babylonian Talmud in 1561—that is, after the Talmud was condemned, confiscated and burned in Rome in 1553 and subsequently elsewhere. However, the Basel council—not wanting to provoke the Roman Church so soon after the burnings—de-

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<sup>7</sup> Stephen G. Burnett, *Christian Hebraism in the Reformation Era (1500-1660)* (Leiden: Brill, 2012) 261. On the trade in books between Protestant Basel and Catholic Italy, see also Pettegree, *The Book in the Renaissance*, 117.

<sup>8</sup> On Froben's genealogy, see Charles William Heckethorn, *The Printers of Basle in the XV. & XVI. Centuries: Their Biographies, Printed Books and Devices* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1897). Erasmus lived in Froben's home intermittently beginning in the 1510s and died there in 1536. See especially, Nicholas Naquin, "On the Shoulders of Hercules: Erasmus, the Froben Press and the 1516 Jerome Edition in Context" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 2013), as well as Lisa Jardine, *Erasmus, Man of Letters: the Construction of Charisma in Print* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993) and Eileen Bloch, "Erasmus and the Froben Press: The Making of an Editor," *Library Quarterly* 32, no. 2 (April 1965): 109–20.

<sup>9</sup> Among them, editions of the biblical wisdom books in Hebrew and Latin translation and Münster's Hebrew and Aramaic dictionaries and grammars, see Joseph Pijls's bibliography in *Die Basler Hebräischen Drucke, 1492-1866: Im Auftrag der Öffentlichen Bibliothek der Universität Basel* (Olten: Urs Graf-Verlag, 1965) 9-55 and Marvin J. Heller, *Printing the Talmud: A History of the Earliest Printed Editions of the Talmud* (New York: I. M. HaSefer, 1993) 242-3.

nied their petition. Thereafter, Hieronymus continued to print titles for Christians until his death in 1563.<sup>10</sup>

### **Ambrosius Froben**

Much existing scholarship on Ambrosius Froben focuses on his fulfillment of his father's plan to print the Babylonian Talmud in 1578-1580. Indeed, Froben printed *Sefer Ḥasidim* shortly after he completed the Talmud and the works are inexorably linked, not in the least because they were prepared for publication by the same editors. Nonetheless, the attention scholars have placed on the censored Talmud—in light of its place in the larger history of Christian censorship and Catholic anti-Judaism—has meant that they have largely ignored Froben's accomplishments as a publisher of other Jewish texts (in Hebrew and in the vernacular).<sup>11</sup>

When Ambrosius, in partnership with his brother Aurelius, assumed leadership of the family business after his father's death, he began by printing the humanistic and religious texts for which his father and grandfather earned their reputations, among them Theodor Zwinger's *Theatrum vitae humanae* (1565) and Flavius Josephus' and Augustine's collected works in Latin translation (1567 and 1569-70, respectively). But by the late-1570s, Ambrosius (without his

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<sup>10</sup> Burnett, "German Jewish Printing," 509-510.

<sup>11</sup> Some exceptions include bibliographic works, such as A.M. Habermann, *Ha-sefer ha-ivri be-hitpathuto: me-simanim le'otiyot u-me-megillah le-sefer*, (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1968) and Marvin J. Heller, "Ambrosius Froben, Israel Zifroni and Hebrew Printing in Freiburg-im-Breisgau" in *Studies in the Making of the Early Hebrew Book* (Leiden: Brill, 2008) 131–50.

brother's assistance) turned his attention almost exclusively to printing in Hebrew and other Jewish languages.<sup>12</sup>

Why Froben made the dramatic decision to shift the focus of his business from conventional academic and Christian titles to Hebrew and Jewish ones is not entirely clear. We can speculate that he resolved to accomplish what his father failed to do, print the condemned Talmud. At the same time, his decision was almost certainly influenced by changes in Catholic attitudes toward Jews and Hebrew literature during the late-sixteenth century and the initiatives of the Counter-Reformation Church, more generally.

In brief, the Roman Church, throughout the sixteenth century, intensified its efforts at stimulating the mass conversion of the Jews. For some church leaders, such as Cardinal Giampietro Carafa (subsequently, Pope Paul IV), the Talmud was a fundamental impediment to Jewish conversion and had to be eliminated. For others, such as the humanists Petrus Galatinus and Andreas Masius, a proper understanding of the Talmud could help the Church achieve its goal; in Galatinus's words, "No book is more appropriate to convince the Jews than the Talmud."<sup>13</sup> These opposing viewpoints led to, in Kenneth Stow's words, a constant "fluctuation" in Church policy toward Hebrew books: from extreme acts of violence—such as confiscations and burnings—to

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<sup>12</sup> This conclusion is drawn from analyzing the data in the Universal Short Title Catalogue, as well as Joseph Prijs's bibliography in *Die Basler Hebräischen Drucke* and Marvin J. Heller, "Ambrosius Froben, Israel Zifroni and Hebrew Printing in Freiburg-im-Breisgau" in *Studies in the Making of the Early Hebrew Book* (Leiden: Brill, 2008) 131–50. I am also not certain why Ambrosius was not assisted in this work by his brother.

<sup>13</sup> Sixteenth-century Church debates over the permissibility of the Talmud, see Salo Wittmayer Baron, "The Council of Trent and Rabbinic Literature" in *Ancient and Medieval Jewish History*, ed. Leon Feldman (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1972) 358; Kenneth R. Stow, "The Burning of the Talmud in 1553, in Light of Sixteenth-Century Catholic Attitudes Toward the Talmud," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 34, no. 3 (1972): 435–459; Fausto Parente, "The Index, the Holy Office and the Condemnation of the Talmud and Publication of Clement VIII's Index" in *Church, Censorship and Culture in Early Modern Italy*, ed. Gigliola Fragnito, trans. Adrian Belton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); and Piet Van Boxel, *Jewish Books in Christian Hands* (Rome: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2016). The quotation from Galatinus is from his *De Arcadis*, quoted by Stow, "The Burning of the Talmud," 449.



limited tolerance—for instance, Pope Julius III's bull *Cum sicut nuper* (1554) which permitted Jews to possess Hebrew books as long as they did not contain blasphemies.<sup>14</sup>

According to Piet van Boxel, moreover, the promulgation of *Cum sicut nuper* was a landmark event, creating the possibility that Hebrew books could exist legally within Catholic domains and the legal rationale for the removal of blaspheming passages in Hebrew books—in other words, a particular type of censorship.<sup>15</sup> In 1561, at the behest of Pope Pius IV, the Michele Ghislieri, Roman inquisitor general and later Pope Pius V, formally proposed a policy of “expurgation”—the deletion of objectionable material in books that were not wholly heretical after publication—in his revision of the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*.<sup>16</sup> This principle was codified in the Tridentine Index of 1564, where it became a primary Church strategy for controlling written heresy and blasphemy. Indeed, as Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin has noted, the Tridentine Index of 1564 was a formal representation of the “internalization of the split with the Protestant world” and an “awareness of a need for a new kind of mechanism of control and new principles of surveillance” of printed literature.<sup>17</sup> Beyond Protestant texts, the Tridentine Index also imposed its new mechanisms of censorship and expurgation on the Talmud, stipulating that Jews could publish it, “provided they are published without the name Talmud and without offense and contume-

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<sup>14</sup> Stow, “The Burning of the Talmud,” 451.

<sup>15</sup> Piet van Boxel, “Robert Bellarmine Reads Rashi: Rabbinic Bible Commentaries and the Burning of the Talmud” in *The Hebrew Book in Early Modern Italy*, eds. Joseph R. Hacker and Adam Shear (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 121-123.

<sup>16</sup> *Moderation Indicis Librium Prohibitorum*, see Parente, “The Index, Holy Office and the Condemnation of the Talmud,” 167.

<sup>17</sup> Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, *The Censor, the Editor, and the Text: The Catholic Church and the Shaping of the Jewish Canon in the Sixteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007) 58.

ly against the Christian religion.”<sup>18</sup> Thus, by the time Froben decided to print the Talmud—unlike when his father attempted this project—the Tridentine Index of 1564 had enshrined the possibility that the Talmud might be published again and circulate under the Church’s control.

In the years that followed, Church policy *vis-à-vis* the Jews, and Jewish books, vacillated between the two poles of persecution and limited toleration. The ascent of Gregory XIII (1572-1585) witnessed the emergence of a new, more aggressive conversionary policy.<sup>19</sup> Epitomized in Gregory XIII’s bull *Antiqua judaeorum improbitas* of 1581, this approach sought to expose Jews to the truths of the Gospel by their requiring regular attendance at Christian sermons. The goal was to entice Jews to the baptismal font by demonstrating the kinship of Jewish and Christian exegesis and, conversely, root out elements within Judaism that contradicted or dishonored Christianity. This policy led Church theologians to compose anthologies of rabbinic texts and commentaries on them—many of which remain extant in manuscript in the Vatican archives—to help preachers and Church theologians demonstrate the misconceptions in Jewish biblical exegesis and the superiority of the Christian tradition, as Boxel has recently shown.<sup>20</sup>

Gregory XIII’s interest in exploiting, in Boxel’s words, Christianity’s theological “common ground” with Judaism in order to promote Jewish conversion provides context for his decision to allow Froben to print a new censored Talmud, as well as new editions of other Hebrew texts.<sup>21</sup> The production of these titles—cleansed of their former blasphemies—would give Jews

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<sup>18</sup> Quoted in Parente, “The Index, Holy Office and the Condemnation of the Talmud,” 169. See also Raz-Krakotzkin, *The Censor, the Editor, and the Text*, 60-64.

<sup>19</sup> Piet van Boxel, *Jewish Books in Christian Hands: Theology, Exegesis and Conversion Under Gregory XIII (1572-1585)* (Vatican: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2002) 31-36

<sup>20</sup> Boxel, *Jewish Books in Christian Hands*, 39-56.

<sup>21</sup> Boxel, *Jewish Books in Christian Hands*, 36.

access to their sacred books without inculcating anti-Christian disdain, as the Church alleged previous editions had.<sup>22</sup> Further, these editions would give preachers and scholars new access to Jewish literature—freed of its calumnies against Christianity—so that it might be used to promote Jewish conversion.

### **The Froben Talmud**

With the Tridentine Index of 1564's stipulation—that the Talmud be published “without the name Talmud and without offense and contumely against the Christian religion”—as guide, in April 1578, Froben entered into a partnership with Simon of Gembs, a Jewish bookseller from Frankfurt-am-Main to print a new edition.<sup>23</sup> Froben met Simon at the Frankfurt fair, the largest and most important book fair in Europe.<sup>24</sup> Simon was known for marketing his wares to the Jews of Poland, and together he and Froben agreed to produce an edition of the “entire Jewish Talmud” following “Marco Antonio Giustiniani's Venice edition of 1547 and its accompanying concordance, with no mistakes.” Their contract detailed that “whatever is objectionable to the Coun-

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<sup>22</sup> It is worth noting while the Church and Christian Hebraists may have perceived Hebrew texts as anti-Christian, Jews may not have shared this view. Christian readers may have dwelled on the anti-Christian passages in these works, but Jewish readers were interested in their many other dimensions. This question of perspective will be discussed in greater detail in the conclusion of this dissertation.

<sup>23</sup> On the Froben Talmud, there is considerable difference of opinion among scholars as to who initiated the project; whether the Jewish community of Mantua or its rabbis were involved in the project; the exact nature of Marco Marini's role; the relationship of this project to others proposed by Cardinal Guglielmo Sirleto and Benito Arias Montano, etc. See Prijs, *Die Basler Hebräischen Drucke*, 175-188, Burnett, “German Jewish Printing,” Marvin J. Heller, *Printing the Talmud: A History of the Earliest Printed Editions of the Talmud* (New York: I.M. HaSefer, 1993), Parante, “The Index, Holy Office and the Condemnation of the Talmud,” 171-174. These recent studies rely heavily on three older monographs which provide ample citations of archival sources, Ernst Staehelin, “Des Basler Buchdruckers Ambrosius Froben Talmudausgabe und Handel mit Rom,” *Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 30 (1930): 7-37; Achilles Nordmann, “Geschichte der Juden in Basel Seit dem Ende der Zweiten Gemeinde bis zur Einführung der Glaubens- und Gewissensfreiheit: 1397-1875,” *Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 13 (1914), 27-29; and Heinrich Pallmann, *Ambrosius Froben von Basel als Drucker des Talmud* (Leipzig: Stad-Bibliothek Frankfurt am Main, 1882).

<sup>24</sup> Pettegree, *The Book in the Renaissance*, 79-82.

cil of Trent (i.e. the Tridentine Index) and to Christian religion” would be removed from the text and that this process of “correction” (*corrigirt*) would be overseen by the Inquisitor of Venice, the Hebraist Marco Marini of Brescia.<sup>25</sup> Simon gave Froben one third of an agreed-upon fee and committed to paying the remaining two thirds over time, as he took delivery of the printed volumes.

Froben, like his father had before him, petitioned the Basel council for permission to go ahead with the project and, this time, with the endorsement of the members of the University of Basel’s theological faculty, the council assented. The first volume of the series appeared in the summer of 1578, Tractate Eduyot of the Mishnah, and subsequent Mishnah and Talmud tractates were produced into 1580.<sup>26</sup> By October 1580, however, Simon dissolved the contract with Froben, citing the poor quality of the printing and rampant damage due to improper packaging.<sup>27</sup> Parente has suggested that Simon was displeased by the “radical expurgation” the text underwent—the book was “no longer that of the Talmud”—and he feared Jewish customers would not want purchase it.<sup>28</sup>

Froben and Simon (and following Simon’s death in 1582, his heirs) waged a protracted, and ultimately unresolved, legal battle that lasted until 1590, each side alleging the other failed to

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<sup>25</sup> The contract is reproduced in Pallmann, *Ambrosius Froben*, 47, my translation.

<sup>26</sup> Tractate Sanhedrin was produced in September of 1580.

<sup>27</sup> Pallmann cites Simon’s letter to Froben, *Ambrosius Froben*, 49, my translation. Problems about packaging and shipping indicate just how complicated the process of producing and transmitting books was. Darnton—in his concept of the “communications circuit”—has emphasized the many parties involved in this process, Robert Darnton, “What Is the History of Books?” *Daedalus* 111, no. 3 (Summer 1982): 67. Under-appreciated but crucially important were the paper manufacturers, press workers and shippers. They held the fate of a title in their hands.

<sup>28</sup> This information is found in one of two letters from Ambrosius Froben to Pope Gregory XIII conserved in the Archive of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Index*, II/i, f. 80r, quoted in Parente, “The Index, Holy Office and the Condemnation of the Talmud,” 174.

live up to their original bargain. At one point, Simon went to Froben's home and repossessed Froben's furniture. For his part, Froben visited Rome and sought the assistance of the Church. In fact, the opposite occurred, on June 1, 1581, Pope Gregory XIII condemned Froben's Talmud, saying it had been insufficiently expurgated.<sup>29</sup> Yet, even as his conflict with Simon raged, Froben turned his attention to producing other titles for Jews, among them *Sefer Hasidim*.

### **Israel Zifroni, et al.**

In order to produce Hebrew books for Jews—not simply Hebrew grammars and Bible translations for Christians—Froben required the assistance of editors and correctors who had sufficient grasp of Hebrew and Aramaic, especially the rabbinic idiom, to prepare exemplars. Shortly after signing his contract with Simon, in May 1578, Froben requested permission from the Basel council to sidestep the official prohibition on the residence of Jews in the city and permit him to recruit a Jew to oversee his project. In his petition, Froben explained to the council that the “special nature of the art” of printing Hebrew and the “inexperience” of the existing printers in Basel necessitated the assistance of a Jewish expert from abroad.<sup>30</sup> Shortly thereafter, Israel Zifroni (aka Zafroni) arrived in Basel. Zifroni was intimately involved in the production of the Froben Talmud and Froben's other works for Jews.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Pallmann, *Ambrosius Froben*, 48; Parente, “The Index, Holy Office and the Condemnation of the Talmud,” 173. This is emblematic, once again, of the haphazard quality of early modern censorship, to be discussed in greater detail in chapter five.

<sup>30</sup> “weyl dises werkh ein besondere art hatt. deren die Thruckergesellen bisher nit genugsam geybet und der sprachen unerfahren, so dass Inen ein Jud zu solchem ganz notwendig,” cited in Nordmann, “Geschichte der Juden in Basel,” 29, my translation.

<sup>31</sup> According to Nordmann, the *Ratsprotokolle* of the Basel Council do not record the council's decision on Froben's petition, however, we can assume it was accepted because Zifroni (and R. Jacob Luzzatto) was engaged in the production of the Talmud by the Summer of 1578, Nordmann, “Geschichte der Juden in Basel,” 29.

Israel Zifroni was one of a growing group of Jewish printing experts who worked in the print shops of northern Italy from the mid-sixteenth century, among them: Cornelio Adelkind, Daniel Bomberg's right hand in Venice; Meir the Scribe at Venturin Ruffanello's press at Mantua; and Jacob b. Naftali ha-Cohen of Gazzuolo at R. Tobias Foa's press at Sabbionetta and later in Mantua.<sup>32</sup> Prior to arriving in Basel, Zifroni worked for the Christian printer Vincenzo Conti at his Hebrew presses in Cremona and Sabbionetta. Zifroni's name appears for the first time in Conti's publications beginning 1556. At Cremona, as at Basel, Zifroni signed his name "Israel Zifroni of Guastalla, residing at Gazzuolo"—highlighting his ties to the towns of central and northern Italy. The mention of Gazzuolo has led some scholars to conclude that he received his initial training from the aforementioned Jacob b. Naftali ha-Cohen of Gazzuolo.<sup>33</sup> A cache of letters sent to Zifroni while at Basel—excerpts of which the Christian Hebraist Johannes Buxtorf the Elder transcribed and published—indicates that Zifroni's peers and colleagues esteemed him for his Judaic knowledge.<sup>34</sup> However, we have no direct testimony to his upbringing or education.<sup>35</sup>

The bibliographer A.M. Habermann speculated that after the closure of Conti's press in Sabbionetta in 1567, Zifroni moved to Venice where he worked for the printer Giovanni di Gara.

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<sup>32</sup> For biographical information about this group, see David Werner Amram, *The Makers of Hebrew Books in Italy: Being Chapters in the History of the Hebrew Printing Press* (Philadelphia: Julius H. Greenstone, 1909). Adelkind is especially notable for his long association with Bomberg, as well as other Venetian Hebrew printers, and his involvement in the copyright infringement dispute with R. Meir Katzenellenbogen, see A.M. Habermann, *Ha-madpis Cornelio Adel Kind u-beno Daniel u-reshimat ha-sefarim she-nidpesu al yedeihem* (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1980).

<sup>33</sup> A. M. Habermann, "Ha'madpis Yisrael ha'Zifroni u'beno Elishama" in *Perakim b'toldot ha'madpism ha'ivri'im v'inyanei sefarim*, (Jerusalem: Reuven Mass, 1978) 217.

<sup>34</sup> He is frequently referred to with the honorific כבוד תורתו and is called a "sage" (*hakham*) by his interlocutors, Habermann, "Ha-madpis Yisrael ha-Zifroni," 272-289.

<sup>35</sup> Habermann calls him a "*talmid hakham*" (a scholar), Habermann, "Ha-madpis Yisrael ha-Zifroni," 217.

(Zifroni worked for di Gara from the late-1580s through the first decade of the 1600s, and perhaps developed a relationship with the celebrated Venetian at this earlier stage of his life.)<sup>36</sup> Whether or not this was the case, by 1578, Zifroni was ensconced in Froben's shop in Basel and his name appears first in Froben's edition of Tractate Kiddushin (c. 1578).<sup>37</sup> There, he is identified as the supervisor of the press's operations using the standard Hebrew expression, "The man who oversees the work (*hukam al ha-malakhah*), Israel Zifroni from Guastalla."<sup>38</sup> Elsewhere, Zifroni identifies himself as a "corrector" (*meggihah*), an "engraver" (*mehokek*) and a "composer" (*mehaber*) and his responsibilities extended to authoring the paratexts that accompanied Froben's publications.<sup>39</sup>

Zifroni was assisted in his work by a team of editors, correctors, censors and composers. Joseph Prijs estimates that a minimum of 10 skilled workers were needed to produce the entire set of Talmud tractates over two and a half years.<sup>40</sup> Some of these workers, likely the majority, were Christians. Indeed, in an editorial postscript to *Kavvanot ha-Aggadot* (1580), Zifroni begged his readers' indulgence for errors that proliferated in the text, because the workers who

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<sup>36</sup> Habermann, "Ha-madpis Yisrael ha-Zifroni," 218; Elisheva Carlebach, "Precious Time: Jewish Wall Calendars in the Valmadonna Collection" in *The Writing on the Wall: A Catalogue of Judaica Broadsides from the Valmadonna Trust Library* (London: Valmadonna Trust Library, 2015) 23.

<sup>37</sup> This tractate is not dated, but this date is assumed based on Joseph Prijs's sequencing of these volumes in his bibliography, Prijs, *Die Basler hebräischen Drucke*, 199.

<sup>38</sup> הגבר הוקם על המלאכה ישראל הזיפרוני מגווסטאלה.

This expression was used regularly during the sixteenth century to indicate the corrector-editor who oversaw the production of a work, in contrast to *madpis* (printer) who owned the press and the *mei'vi l'beit ha'dfus* (publisher) who enabled a work's printing, whether by underwriting the costs or by providing manuscripts. Though these terms are notoriously imprecise.

<sup>39</sup> Menahem ibn Zarah, *Zeidah le-derekh* (Sabbionetta, 1567) 1b and *Hamishah humshei Torah ve-hamesh megillot* (Sabbionetta, 1567) 1b. On Zifroni's role in preparing texts and paratexts, see Habermann, "Ha-madpis Yisrael ha-Zifroni," 231-232; Carlebach, "Precious Time," 23.

<sup>40</sup> Prijs, *Die Basler Hebräischen Drucke*, 178.

printed the book, “were not Jews and the work was great and when something is necessary you run and fall sometimes, and they also did so on the Jewish festivals” when there were no Jews present to supervise them.<sup>41</sup>

We know—in contrast to Froben’s petition to secure the residence of a single Jew to assist him in his printing endeavor—that Zifroni was assisted by other Jews and one individual in particular: R. Jacob Luzzatto. Luzzatto was the compiler of the aforementioned *Kavvanot ha-Aggadot* (also entitled, *Kaftor va’Ferah* and *Yash’resh Ya’akov*) which Froben printed in 1580, almost simultaneously with *Sefer Ḥasidim*.<sup>42</sup> Luzzatto also edited and underwrote the publication of R. Menahem b. Benjamin Recanati’s *Ta’amei Ha’Mizvot*, in 1581.<sup>43</sup> We know little about Luzzatto beyond what he wrote in these works.<sup>44</sup>

In the colophon to *Kavvanot ha-Aggadot*, Luzzatto calls himself a “resident of Safed.” Umberto Cassuto proposed that Luzzatto lived a peripatetic life, traveling throughout Italy and Poland.<sup>45</sup> The nineteenth-century Italian Jewish poet and antiquarian Samuel David Luzzatto, who counted R. Jacob Luzzatto among his ancestors, asserted that Luzzatto was of German origin and that he was a “true Kabbalist” “all-soaked in moral allegories and kabbalistic

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<sup>41</sup> אף אם אמנם שגיאות איזה תיבה או אות לא ימלט להחליף טוב ברע כי מי שיבין טבע מלאכת הדפוס ידעו ההכרחי לא מיד המחבר היתה זאת ויד האומנים היתה בהם בעצם ובראשונה כי לא מבני ישראל המה והמלאכה מרובה ודבר נחוץ תרוץ ותכשול לפעמים ומה גם בימי הרגלים כל איש ישראל לרגל עולים להיות במניין הכשרים הישראלים....

<sup>42</sup> All three titles appeared on the title page, however, different copies privilege and enlarge different titles. It is not entirely clear to me why Froben used multiple titles. One supposition is that because the work discussed *aggadot* that Christian theologians condemned—such as BT Berakhot 3a which describes God “wailing like a lion” over the destruction of the Temple—Froben hoped that if one version of the book were condemned others might continue to circulate. On Christian responses to similar texts from BT Berakhot, see Stow, “The Burning of the Talmud,” 445-446.

<sup>43</sup> See the colophon to Menahem b. Benjamin Recanati, *Sefer Ta’amei ha-mizvot* (Basel, 1581)

<sup>44</sup> See also Samuel Joseph Fuenn, *Keneset Yisrael* (Warsaw, 1887), who ascribes a number of other works to him.

<sup>45</sup> *Encyclopedia Judaica*, s.v. “Luzzatto, Jacob ben Isaac.”



mysteries.”<sup>46</sup> Luzzatto is correct in his apprehension of *Kavvanot ha-Aggadot*, a compendium of aggadic texts from the Babylonian Talmud, presented alongside essays that cross-referenced them with aggadic texts from other sources, along with allegorical and mystical interpretations.<sup>47</sup> Regardless of his background and biography, a comparison between *Kavvanot ha-Aggadot* and Froben’s edition of *Sefer Hasidim* leads to the conclusion that Luzzatto played an key role in the production of the latter title.<sup>48</sup>

In addition to Luzzatto, R. Elijah b. Moses Loans (aka Lunschitz), who may have been an investor in the Froben Talmud edition, was also likely a proofreader in Froben’s shop. Elijah was a celebrated mystic who lived and taught throughout the Rhine valley and is known to have authored a number of kabbalistic works including, *Rinat Dodim* (1600), a commentary on the Song of Songs, and *Miklol Yofi* (1695), a commentary on Ecclesiastes.<sup>49</sup> Elijah worked as a proofreader for Froben’s contemporary, the Basel printer, Konrad Waldkirch, where his name appears in some Hebrew titles.<sup>50</sup> Based on this fact, as well as a reference to him in Zifroni’s letters preserved by Buxtorf, Habermann concluded that Elijah worked for Froben as well.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Samuel David Luzzatto, *Autobiografia di S. D. Luzzatto preceduta da alcune notizie storico-letterarie sulla famiglia Luzzatto*, (Padua: Crescini, 1882) 10, my translation.

<sup>47</sup> On significance of *Kavvanot ha-Aggadot* and the revival of the study of *aggadah* in the early modern period, see chapter four.

<sup>48</sup> See below.

<sup>49</sup> *Jewish Encyclopedia*, s.v. “Loans, Elijah ben Moses Ashkenazi or Loanz.”

<sup>50</sup> Waldkirch also published Elijah’s compositions, see Eliezer Landshuth, *Sefer amudei ha-avodah* (Berlin, 1884) 16. See also, Joanna Weinberg, “Johann Buxtorf Makes a Notebook” in *Canonical Texts and Scholarly Practices a Global Comparative Approach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016) 286.

<sup>51</sup> Habermann, “Ha-madpis Yisrael ha-Zifroni,” 275.

Froben also collaborated with a number of Christian scholars—Catholic and Protestant—who acted as censors for the Talmud project, and perhaps other publications as well.<sup>52</sup> Foremost among them was Marco Marini of Brescia (1541–1594), the Inquisitor of Venice, whose oversight Froben and Simon stipulated in their initial contract. Marini was a Hebraist, who had learned the language from a converted Jew in Brescia. Boxel identified Marini as was one of a group of late-sixteenth-century Catholic scholars who collected and transcribed rabbinic texts for use in conversionary sermons.<sup>53</sup> Shortly after the Froben Talmud appeared, and Simon and Froben’s lawsuit ensued, Marini was taken to task by Pope Gregory XIII for insufficiently censoring the Talmud and delegating the task to his assistants.<sup>54</sup> In addition, to Marini’s work as a censor, Froben also published his Hebrew grammar, *Sefer Gan Eden*, in 1580.

It is possible that the pope condemned Marini because Marini was assisted by the Protestant Hebraists Immanuel Tremellius and Pierre Chevalier. Tremellius was a converted Jew from Ferrara and a peripatetic professor of Hebrew. In a letter to the French Calvinist theologian Theodore Beza from 1579, Tremellius recounted that while at the University of Heidelberg, that is, prior to his departure in 1577, Froben personally invited him to correct and censor several volumes of the Talmud.<sup>55</sup> Tremellius agreed enthusiastically and subsequently provided Froben with thoroughly censored and annotated copies of selected tractates. In the years that followed,

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<sup>52</sup> I have not found censors marks in Froben’s non-talmudic publications, however.

<sup>53</sup> Burnett, “German Jewish Printing in the Reformation Era” 511; Boxel, *Jewish Books in Christian Hands*, 54.

<sup>54</sup> Parente, “The Index, Holy Office and the Condemnation of the Talmud,” 173.

<sup>55</sup> This letter is discussed in Kenneth Austin, *From Judaism to Calvinism: the Life and Writings of Immanuel Tremellius (C. 1510-1580)* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007) 169-172. The chronology Tremellius recounts intriguing, for if Froben approached Tremellius prior to his departure from Heidelberg in 1577, that was prior to his contract with Simon of Gembs, meaning that either Froben and Simon had discussed and planned their collaboration at least a year prior to the signing of their contract in 1578, or Froben had intended to publish the Talmud himself.

rumors circulated impugning Tremellius for participating in this venture. In his letter to Beza, Tremellius defended his work, explaining, in Kenneth Austin's words, "He had eliminated so much of the book that it would not have appealed to Catholics...or to the Jews, since so little of the original text was left."<sup>56</sup> An assessment that Froben himself would offer in his defense of his Talmud before Pope Gregory XIII.

Additionally, according to Buxtorf, Froben also engaged Pierre Chevalier, a Hebrew student at the University of Basel who subsequently served as Professor of Hebrew in Geneva.<sup>57</sup> There, Chevalier taught noted the humanist and Hebraist Isaac Casaubon. Casaubon's notes from his classes indicate that Chevalier took an interest in *kabbalah* and Jewish magic. Further, Casaubon owned a copy of Froben's edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* and it is possible he first encountered the title in Chevalier's classes.<sup>58</sup> Prijs has asserted that Chevalier merely lent his name to the project and did not serve as a censor.<sup>59</sup>

There is no indication, however, that these Christian scholars played a role in the production of Froben's edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim*. The book contains no mention of the supervision of a particular censor or censor's mark, unlike Froben's Talmud, where the title page featured Marco Marini's name prominently and where several pages include Christological glosses.<sup>60</sup> While the

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<sup>56</sup> Austin, *From Judaism to Calvinism*, 172.

<sup>57</sup> On Chevalier, see G. Lloyd Jones, *The Discovery of Hebrew in Tudor England: A Third Language* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983) 77-78.

<sup>58</sup> Anthony T. Grafton and Joanna Weinberg, *"I Have Always Loved the Holy Tongue": Isaac Casaubon, the Jews, and a Forgotten Chapter in Renaissance Scholarship* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011) 87.

<sup>59</sup> Prijs quotes Buxtorf's statement that Chevalier was the "censor of the Talmud," in his *Lexicon Caladium*, see Prijs, *Die Basler Hebräischen Drucke*, 176.

<sup>60</sup> See R. N. N. Rabinovicz, *Ma'amar al hadpasat ha-Talmud* (Munich: Hoover, 1877) 68-69; William Popper, *The Censorship of Hebrew Books* (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1899) 60.

text of Froben's *Sefer Hasidim* edition was censored—and more thoroughly censored than the first edition—there is no indication that a Christian carried out this work.<sup>61</sup>

### **The Late-Sixteenth-Century Hebrew Print Shop**

The political, social and religious context out of which the second printed edition of *Sefer Hasidim* emerged was radically different from that of the first printed edition. While the first was printed by a group of Jewish entrepreneurs exploring a new trade, the second printed edition was created in an established Christian print shop and fashioned by a team of experienced Jewish and Christian printing professionals. Indeed, in the intervening years since the partners published their edition, the business of Hebrew printing underwent a transformation.

While the first Hebrew presses were owned and operated by Jews—such as the partners—beginning in the mid-sixteenth century, Christians printers began to expand into the Hebrew book market. To a certain extent, this was a consequence of anti-Jewish regulations. In Venice, the largest book producing city in the early-sixteenth century, Daniel Bomberg, a Christian, owned a state-granted monopoly on Hebrew printing until 1548. Thereafter, the Venetian Senate forbade Jews from printing their own books; they continued to be produced at Christian-owned shops.<sup>62</sup> Similar regulations existed elsewhere in Italy. Thus, in Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin's words, "The major part of the Hebrew book industry in Italy was concentrated in Christian-owned print shops."<sup>63</sup> Elsewhere in Europe, Christians' demand for Hebrew books (multi-lingual

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<sup>61</sup> On this censorship, see chapter five.

<sup>62</sup> Paul F. Grendler, "The Destruction of Hebrew Books in Venice, 1568," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 45 (1978): 105.

<sup>63</sup> Raz-Krakotzkin, *The Censor, The Editor and the Text*, 102.

Bibles and grammars) led established Christian printers to begin producing Hebrew books as well. By the late-sixteenth century, some of these shops also began printing books for Jews.<sup>64</sup>

Christian printers of Hebrew titles required the assistance of a loose network of Jewish printing experts who had a deep familiarity with the language in its various idioms and cognates.<sup>65</sup> These Jews worked at, what Anthony Grafton has termed, “inky crossroads where publishing and scholarship intersected.”<sup>66</sup> Their work involved the interrelated tasks of establishing the proper reading of a text through the collation of manuscripts and the application of philological techniques; censorship, that is, eliminating material that might be taken as offensive or blasphemous; preparing paratextual documents—from introductions to finding aids to indices; and correcting printed copy against an exemplar.<sup>67</sup> Indeed, while the first printers of Hebrew books, such as the partners, certainly engaged in these practices, during the course of the sixteenth century a new generation of Jewish printers—often trained in Italy—spread across Europe and began to formalize and professionalize these tasks, while also producing a wider range of Hebrew and vernacular Jewish titles.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> On German Hebrew printing regulations, see Stephen G. Burnett, “Christian Hebrew Printing in the Sixteenth Century: Printers, Humanism and the Impact of the Reformation,” *Helmantica: Revista de Filología Clásica y Hebraica* 51, no. 154 (Winter 2000): 13–42.

<sup>65</sup> For a resume of sixteenth-century Hebrew presses in Italy, see David Werner Amram, *The Makers of Hebrew Books in Italy: Being Chapters in the History of the Hebrew Printing Press* (Philadelphia: Julius H. Greenstone, 1909). On Germany, see Burnett, “Christian Hebrew Printing,” 13–42. On Poland, see Magda Teter and Edward Fram, “Apostasy, Fraud, and the Beginnings of Hebrew Printing in Cracow,” *AJS Review* 30, no. 1 (2006): 31–66.

<sup>66</sup> Anthony Grafton, *The Culture of Correction in Renaissance Europe* (London: British Library, 2011) 58.

<sup>67</sup> See Grafton, *The Culture of Correction*, 11.

<sup>68</sup> This process mirrors what occurred among vernacular printers, see Brian Richardson, *Print Culture in Renaissance Italy: the Editor and the Vernacular Text, 1470-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 182–183.

## Chapter 4

### The Second Printed Edition of Sefer Ḥasidim: Overview and Paratexts

This chapter provides an overview of the structure and unique features of Froben's edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* and a close reading of its paratexts. The paratexts—such as the title page, introductions and table of contents—give us insight into why Froben printed *Sefer Ḥasidim* forty years after the first edition, its intended readership, and what kinds of messages and meanings he (and his editors) hoped readers would encounter in the text. The paratexts show that Froben's editors—especially R. Jacob Luzzatto—sought to present their edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* as a replacement for and improvement on the first edition and to depict it as a work of religious and spiritual authority akin to classical aggadic compendia, such as *Genesis Rabbah* or *Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer*, or even the *Zohar*.

#### Structure

Froben's edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* opens with a title page, followed by two introductions (*hakdamot*). The first introduction covers half a page and is entitled, "Introduction in praise of the book and its composer, of blessed memory."<sup>1</sup> The second introduction, entitled, "Introduction to *Sefer Ḥasidim*" is longer, spanning two full pages.<sup>2</sup> This chapter provides evidence supporting the conclusion that both introductions were composed by R. Jacob Luzzatto. A four-page table of contents follows the second introduction. It is considerably different from that of the first edition.

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<sup>1</sup> הקדמה במהלל הספר והמחבר זצ"ל

<sup>2</sup> הקדמה לספר חסידים

Following the table, we find the text of *Sefer Ḥasidim*, comprising just under 1200 pericopes. These pericopes are generally identical to those of the first edition—with some significant variations. These variations include forms of censorship and emendation—to be discussed in greater detail in chapter five. The folios of the edition are numbered using Hebrew characters; some contain subject headings. There is no colophon or concluding statement other than the words, “The Book of the Pious (*Sefer ha-Ḥasidim*) is concluded, praise to God.”<sup>3</sup>

### Title Page

Like many Hebrew title pages of the 1520s and 30s, the first edition’s title page is unadorned and laconic (see figure three).<sup>4</sup> The words “*Sefer ha-Ḥasidim*” (“the Book of the Pious”) appear in the center in large type, with the impressum, “Printed here, Bologna, by the partners, may they succeed and live, in fear of God” below it, in slightly smaller type, spread over three lines.<sup>5</sup> In its simplicity, this title page shares much with other Hebrew title pages of the first decades of the sixteenth century, such as those of Daniel Bomberg’s first Talmud edition, which include only the names of the texts contained in the volume and an impressum (see figure four).<sup>6</sup>

Nothing could be more different than the title page of the second edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim*: It contains two panels of text, each surrounded by a separate ornamental frame (see figure

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<sup>3</sup> נשלם ספר החסידים תהלה לאל:

<sup>4</sup> *Jewish Encyclopedia*, s.v. “Title-Page.”

<sup>5</sup> ספר החסידים נדפס פה בולונייז ע”י השותפים יצ”ו ל”א

<sup>6</sup> The title page of the first volume of the Bomberg Talmud edition of 1520 reads: “Tractate Berakhot with Rashi’s commentary and Tosafot” in large type, with the words “And the judgements of Tosafot (piskei Tosafot), the commentary of the Mishnahs and Rebbeinu Asher, printed by Daniel Bomberg of Antwerp in the year 480 [1520] according to the abbreviated calculation here in” in smaller type spread over three lines below it, and “Venice” in larger type, on the bottom line, *Tractate Beraḥot...* (Venice, 1520).

# ספר החסידים

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Figure 3

Title Page of the Partners' edition of Sefer Ḥasidim (Bologna, 1538)

Courtesy of [HebrewBooks.org](http://HebrewBooks.org)

## מסכת בכורות עם פירוש רשי ותוספות

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Figure 4

Title Page of Tractate Berakhot in the Bomberg Talmud (Venice, 1520)

Courtesy of [HebrewBooks.org](http://HebrewBooks.org)



five). The top half of the page contains the title of the work, “*Sefer ha-Hasidim*,” surrounded by a rectangular frame of large vines and flowers. The bottom half of the page contains another text panel surrounded by its own frame, a more intricate array of vines symmetrically interwoven with hearts, spades and other geometric forms. Froben’s print shop used this second, more-intricate frame regularly in the 1580s.<sup>7</sup>

This lower text panel contains an effusive description of *Sefer Hasidim* in its new edition. Many of the boasts printed here are reprised in lengthier form in the book’s two introductions, to which they may be compared:

For the people of the Lord, the remnants.<sup>8</sup> The treasures of the generation. These ones who walk among [the ministering angels] who stand.<sup>9</sup> Corrected with pleasant and honorable literal scriptural interpretations.<sup>10</sup> With good and learned ethical teachings. For students (*talmidim*).

A composition of the father and head of all the pious people, the holy one, our rabbi, Judah he-Hasid, may he be remembered for life in the world to come.

Copied from a very ancient book, corrected (*mugah*) and expurgated (*mezukkak*) many times over. Because of this thing, you shall clear out the old and replace it with the new.<sup>11</sup> This [holy] object they brought to the treasure house.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> See R. Ephraim b. Aaron of Luntshits, *Ir Gibborim* (1580) and R. Menahem b. Benjamin Recanati, *Sefer Ta’amei haMitzvot* (1581).

<sup>8</sup> See Joel 3:5 and Jeremiah 31:1.

<sup>9</sup> This is an allusion to Zachariah 3:7 which describes the benefits accorded to the righteous who may dwell among the ministering angels, “Thus said the Lord of Hosts: If you walk in My paths and keep My charge, you in turn will rule My House and guard My courts, and I will permit you to move about among these attendants.”

<sup>10</sup> I am unsure of whether to translate the verb *metukkan* here as “corrected,” and thereby as a reference to the editing this edition went through in contrast to the first edition, or more simply, “made fit or proper” referring to the content of the book more generally. Perhaps, as Elisheva Carlebach has suggested, the verb was meant to be deliberately ambiguous.

<sup>11</sup> This alludes to the biblical promise, “You shall eat old grain long stored, and you shall have to clear out the old to make room for the new” (Leviticus 26:10).

<sup>12</sup> This alludes to the pillaging of the Jerusalem Temple by Nebuchadnezzar, as described in Daniel 1:2, “The Lord delivered King Jehoiakim of Judah into his power, together with some of the vessels of the House of God, and he brought them to the land of Shinar to the house of his god; he deposited the vessels in the treasury of his god.”



Figure 5

Title Page of Froben's edition of Sefer Ḥasidim (Basel, 1581)

Courtesy of HebrewBooks.org

Printed in the city of Basel, the grand.

May her glory be exalted and her sovereignty extolled.

By order of the prince, Ambrosius Froben, may he and his descendants live, and in his house.

All the work was completed (1 Kings 7:49) in the month of Kislev, the year 341 [1581], meaning [i.e. equivalent to the numerical value of the verse,] “This is none other than the abode of God, and that is the gateway to heaven” (Genesis 28:17).<sup>13</sup>

Brian Richardson has observed that “In the course of the Cinquecento, title pages...became more and more prolix and crowded in an effort to publicize the intellectual and legal status of the book, combining the roles which nowadays we would expect to see shared among the title page, the title verso, the cover of a paperback or the dust jacket of a hardback book, and sometimes also the contents page.”<sup>14</sup> This is just what we find in Froben’s *Sefer Hasidim*. The title page served a number of interrelated purposes: (a) It was an advertisement, promoting the book by appealing to readers’ spiritual aspirations and by linking Froben’s print shop to the venerable printing houses of Italy; (b) it established the authorship and provenance of the text, and thereby its authority and credibility; (c) it asserted the superiority of the new edition’s textual editing and the inferiority of the first edition; and (d) it imagined for the text an ideal readership of students (*talmidim*).

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<sup>13</sup> לעם ה' השרידים. לסגולי הדור היחידים. המהלכים האלה בין העומדים. מתוקן בפשטים נעימים ונכבדים. עם מוסרי דרכים טובים ולמודים. לתלמידים. חברו אב וראש לכל החסידים. הקדוש רבינו יהודה החסיד זלה"ה. הועתק מספר ישן נושן מוגה ומזוקק שבעתים. ובגלל הדבר הזה ישן מפני חדש תוציאו. וכלי זה אל בית האוצר הביאו. נדפס בעיר בסיליאה בגדולה. ירום הודה ותנשא מלכותה. במצות השר אמברוסיאו פרוביניאו י"צו [כך] ובביתו. ותשלם כל המלאכה בחדש כסלו שנת שמ"א פ' אין זה כי אם בית אלהים וזה שער השמים.

<sup>14</sup> Brian Richardson, *Printing, Writers and Readers in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 133.

## Self-Promotion

Like much early modern Hebrew prose, and Hebrew paratexts in particular, the title page is redolent with biblical allusions. The opening phrase, “For the people of the Lord, the remnants” was a pious locution recalling promises made in the Books of Joel and Jeremiah that a pious few would survive the trials of divine retribution and exile.<sup>15</sup> *Sefer Ḥasidim* was meant for readers like these, the title page asserted, the “remnants” (*seridim*), “treasures” (*segulim*) of the Jewish people, who walk among the heavenly angels in God’s court (an allusion to Zachariah 3:7).

This claim reappeared in the edition’s introductions and was consistent with the aspiration of the text of *Sefer Ḥasidim* itself. In its first pericope, the text envisioned a limited, spiritually elite readership: “It was written for God-fearers and ones who think about His name, for a pious person whose heart desired the love of his Creator to do all His will...but not for the wicked was it written, for if the wicked were to see it, they would see some things in their eyes which are things of nonsense....”<sup>16</sup> Establishing this claim on the title page, and later in the first introduction, was a form of flattery meant to appeal to readers’ aspirations to piety.

The last line of the title page also served a promotional function. Froben’s name was Italianized (in Hebrew characters) to “Ambrosio Frobenio,” as it was on most of his title pages. Sim-

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<sup>15</sup> The verses are as follows: “But everyone who invokes the name of the Lord shall escape; for there shall be a remnant on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, as the Lord promised. Anyone who invokes the Lord will be among the survivors.” (Joel 3:5) and “At that time—declares the Lord—I will be God to all the clans of Israel, and they shall be My people. Thus said the Lord: The people escaped from the sword, Found favor in the wilderness; When Israel was marching homeward” (Jeremiah 31:1-2). For other uses of this phrase, see Joseph Solomon Delmedigo, *Sefer Meẓaref le-hokhmah* (Warsaw, 1892) 48 and Shabbatai ben Meir ha-Cohen Katz’s introduction to the *seliḥot* for the victims of the massacres in *Seliḥot...* (Amsterdam: Yohanan Levi, 1806).

<sup>16</sup> ונכתב ליראי ה' ולחושבי שמו כי חסיד אשר לבו חפץ באהבת בוראו לעשות כל רצונו... אך לא לרשעים נכתב' שאם יראו בו רשעים יהיו נראים כמה דברי' בעיניהם דברי שטות...  
My translation according to the second printed edition’s text.

ilarly, the city of Basel was called, “Basilea.” Joseph Prijs has asserted this was a practice Zifroni instituted in order to link Froben’s print shop to its distinguished Italian predecessors.<sup>17</sup> Until the early-seventeenth century, the printing houses of Italy produced nearly half of all Hebrew printed books, more than any other region. Even after the Italian presses were eclipsed by those of Amsterdam and eastern Europe, works produced in Italy during the sixteenth century set the standard for Hebrew typography for successive generations to emulate.<sup>18</sup> Zifroni, of course, was trained in Italy and his works—especially the Froben Talmud edition—relied on the patronage and assistance of Italian scholars and religious authorities, not in the least the Venetian censor, Marco Marino of Brescia and Pope Gregory XIII. The Froben press was thus very much an extension of the Hebrew print shops of Italy and his title page was meant to recall the standards of Hebrew printing established there earlier in the century.

### Provenance

The second paragraph of the title page ascribes authorship of the book to R. Judah he-Ḥasid, who was said to have “composed” (*heber*) the book. Later in the chapter, I will explore this statement in greater detail. For the moment, it is worth noting that Judah’s righteousness is declaimed with the honorifics, “the father and head of all the pious people, the holy one, our rab-

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<sup>17</sup> Joseph Prijs, *Die Basler Hebräischen Drucke, 1492-1866: Im Auftrag der Öffentlichen Bibliothek der Universität Basel* (Olten: Urs Graf-Verlag, 1965) 184.

<sup>18</sup> Anat Gueta, “The Hebrew Imprints of the ‘Shin’ Years as a Resource for the Research of Jewish Society’s Spiritual Life” [Hebrew] (Ph.D. Dissertation, Bar Ilan University, 2002); Adam Shear and Joseph R. Hacker, “Introduction” in *The Hebrew Book in Early Modern Italy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 8; Joshua Bloch, “Venetian Printers of Hebrew Books” in *Hebrew Printing and Bibliography: Studies by Joshua Bloch and Others, Reprinted From the Publications of the New York Public Library on the Occasion of the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Jewish Division of the New York Public Library*, ed. Charles Berlin (New York: The New York Public Library, 1976) 65-88; Marvin J. Heller, “Introduction” in *The Sixteenth Century Hebrew Book: An Abridged Thesaurus*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2004) xv-xvii.

bi” on the title page. In chapter two, we explored how sixteenth-century printers, and R. Abraham b. Moses ha-Cohen in particular, used paratexts to ascribe authorship and authority to newly printed works. Perhaps surprisingly, however, Judah’s name did not appear on the title page of the first edition. Indeed, in the early-sixteenth century, title pages of both Jewish and non-Jewish printed books regularly lacked authorial ascriptions. The work of linking a text to an author occurred in the introduction. By the late-sixteenth century, printers had recognized they could bestow authority and credibility on their publications by recalling the author’s name, along with biographical information and even a portrait, on the title page.<sup>19</sup> This is exactly what occurred in Froben’s edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim*.

After ascribing authorship, the title page established the edition’s provenance: It was “copied from a very ancient (*yashan noshan*) book, corrected and expurgated (*mugah v’mezukkak*) many times over.” This claim rings of hyperbole common to sixteenth-century title pages. The expression “very ancient” (*yashan noshan*) was a stock expression regularly used by printers harking back to the Book of Leviticus: The biblical promise that the righteous will “eat old grain long stored (literally, “very ancient,” *yashan noshan*), and you shall have to clear out the old to make room for the new” (26:10). Froben’s new edition, thus, was a “very ancient” text made new through an intensive editorial process, described with the Hebrew terms, *haggahah* (correction) and *zikkuk* (refining, expurgation)—in other words, the best of both old and new.<sup>20</sup>

A comparison of the texts of the first and second printed editions, however, leads to the conclusion that the second edition was a reproduction of the first, albeit with emendations and

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<sup>19</sup> Richardson, *Printing, Writers and Readers in Renaissance Italy*, 132.

<sup>20</sup> The significance of these terms—*haggahah* (correction) and *zikkuk* (expurgation)—will be discussed in greater detail below.

glosses.<sup>21</sup> Dissonance between claims like these and textual realities should not surprise us, however. As Martin Lowry has noted, “Boasts of having access to special material, of working with exceptional care or facing insuperable difficulties, were all parts of the publisher’s stock in trade” in the sixteenth century.<sup>22</sup> Even Aldus Manutius, the famed early-sixteenth-century printer of classical texts who bragged of seeking out lost or hidden manuscripts and carefully comparing and collating them into superior editions, exaggerated his efforts. According to Lowry, Aldus very often made use of well-known and readily available exemplars and his editing was often “subjective or arbitrary.”<sup>23</sup>

The claim that Froben’s new edition was derived from a “very ancient” copy is also reminiscent of Abraham’s assertion, in his colophon to the first edition, that in his day, *Sefer Ḥasidim* “was not found in this region as far as Jerusalem...the only hidden [copy] was with me.” In the world of early modern printing, just as today, printers and readers understood access to hitherto unavailable material of venerable provenance as a mark of credibility. Luzzatto emphasized the same point in his first introduction, where, through a play on words, he analogized between the increasing number of people seeking to live a pious life and those seeking out copies of *Sefer Ḥasidim*:

They have increased (Zachariah 10:8), they wander around seeking it, to be counted in the faction of the fit (*be-kat ha-keshirim*), the pious; to be the ones who walk among those who stand (i.e. the ministering angels, Zachariah 3:7); in order to add holiness to their holiness and the ways of study, to instruct the students. Deficient is the number of the pious (or, in a play on the words *mispar* and

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<sup>21</sup> Changes to the text itself will be discussed in greater detail in chapter five.

<sup>22</sup> Martin Lowry, *The World of Aldus Manutius: Business and Scholarship in Renaissance Venice* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1979)

<sup>23</sup> Lowry, *The World of Aldus Manutius*, 236-241.

*mi-sefer*, “they are lacking *Sefer Hasidim*”] for they [i.e. the pious/the book] are found only among the elite—few and far between (Jeremiah 3:14).<sup>24</sup>

The implication of this statement, like its parallel on the title page, was that the scarcity of *Sefer Hasidim* and demand for it necessitated production of new edition. Further, the edition formerly available, that is, the first printed edition, was deficient. About it, Luzzatto wrote in his first introduction, “These are not refined (*mezukkakim*) correctly and corrected (*mugahim*) properly.”<sup>25</sup> The text of the new edition thus had to be “corrected and expurgated many times over.”

### Correction and Censorship

Boasting of the superiority of the volume’s editing on the title page was not simply a gesture of self-promotion. It also testified to widespread concern among printers and readers that, in Grafton’s words, “Print was totally uncontrolled: a realm of wild, arbitrary textual mutations....”<sup>26</sup> As Adrian Johns has shown, early modern printers labored to convince their readers of the veracity of their works, “Veracity in particular is...extrinsic to the press itself, and has had to be grafted on to it...only by virtue of hard work.” In order to do this, they developed various techniques—from paratexts like title pages and imprimaturs, to guild regulations and monopolies—meant to convince readers of their publications’ merit.<sup>27</sup> Proclaiming the correctness of a printed work, and decrying other editions for their errors, as Froben did on the title

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<sup>24</sup> רבו כמו רבו ישוטטו יבקשוהו להיות נמנים בכת הכשרים החסידים. להיותם מהלכים בין העומדים. כדי להוסיף קדושה על קדושתם והדרכים הלמודים. ללמד לתלמידים. וחסר הוא מספר חסידים. כי לא נמצאו רק בין היחידים. אחד מעיר ושתיים ממשפחה.

<sup>25</sup> ואלו אינם מזוקקים כראוי ומוגהים כהלכה.

<sup>26</sup> Grafton, *The Culture of Correction in Renaissance Europe*, 79.

<sup>27</sup> Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998) 2, see his second and third chapters in particular, on the techniques printers used to establish veracity, 58-265.



page, was an oft-used technique of establishing a text's credibility. In Richardson's words, "Printers and editors did not tire of using letters to the readers or dedications in order to compose, with differing degrees of honesty, variations on the same commonplace: that the carelessness, ignorance or greed of those responsible for the text up to now (whether scribes or printers) had been responsible for the degradation of the text, but that, thanks to the generosity and care of the present printer, the work was now in its original state."<sup>28</sup>

At the same time, "More than one Renaissance book," Grafton writes, "ends with a corrector's expression of despair" at the impossibility of eliminating errors.<sup>29</sup> In a notable expression of frustration and resignation, in his colophon to Luzzatto's *Kavvanot ha-Aggadot*, Zifroni begged his readers' indulgence for "certain mistakes of words or letters" on account of which they should not,

Judge a good book harshly, for one who understands the nature of the business of printing will know that this was not the will of the composer, rather it was on account of the craftsmen first and foremost, for they were not Jews and the work was great (M Avot 2:15) and when something is urgent you run and fall sometimes, and they also did so on the Jewish festivals....<sup>30</sup>

Printing was, in essence, a collaborative enterprise that required the skill and expertise of many individuals working in tandem. At each step of the way—from the preparation of an exemplar to the compositing of type—these craftsmen could introduce changes that readers might perceive as erroneous (or worse perhaps, never perceive at all). The non-Jews in Froben's shop, Zifroni announced, lacked the knowledge to properly prepare a Hebrew text without supervision and still

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<sup>28</sup> Richardson, *Print Culture in Renaissance Italy*, 3.

<sup>29</sup> Grafton, *The Culture of Correction in Renaissance Europe*, 84.

<sup>30</sup> ואף אם אמנם שגיאות איזה תיבה או אות לא ימלט להחליף טוב ברע כי מי שיבין טבע מלאכת הדפוס ידעו ההכרחי לא מיד המחבר היתה זאת ויד האומנים היתה זאת ויד האומנים היתה בהם בעצם ובראשונה כי לא מבני ישראל המה והמלכאה מרובה ודבר נחוץ תרוץ ותכשול לפעמים ומה גם בימי הרגלים כל איש ישראל לרגל עולים להיות במניין הכשרים הישראלים....

worked when Jewish supervisors were unavailable. Such was the business of Hebrew printing in the sixteenth century, especially in cities like Basel where only a small number of Jews were permitted to live and where Froben's press was operated primarily by Christians. Thus, printers found themselves in a difficult position: They bowed their heads in acknowledgement of ever-present textual corruptions and errors, both those introduced by generations of scribes and those made more recently in the print shop, while simultaneously hoping to win new readers by bragging about their ability to produce more correct and accurate editions.

Indeed, Luzzatto, in rhymed prose, emphasized the superiority of the editing of Froben's edition of *Sefer Haisidim* in the second introduction:

I arrived at and found sayings of uprightness (*imrei yosher*), written with a godly finger (Exodus 31:18, Deuteronomy 9:10), words of fitness (*divrei kosher*); expurgated, refined, corrected and approved (*mezukkak, mezuraf, mugah u-me'ushar*), this one canceling out all earlier editions (Genesis Rabbah 12:13). This one comes to displace that one. Rabbi Yosi's statement is already well known, from the second chapter of [Babylonian Talmud, tractate] Ketubot, [regarding the biblical verse], "do not let injustice reside in your tent" (Job 11:14): "This refers to a person who retains an uncorrected book (*sefer she-eino mugeh*) in his house."<sup>31</sup>

Richardson has emphasized that printers pulled no punches when calling out the "carelessness, ignorance or greed" of their colleagues.<sup>32</sup> Here, with a helping of hyperbole common in early modern paratexts, Luzzatto applied the rabbinic teaching that one may not possess an "uncorrected book" to the first edition of *Sefer Hasidim*, comparing it to the biblical verse's

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<sup>31</sup> ויגעתי ומצאתי אמרי יושר. כתוב האצבע אלהי דברי כושר. מזוקק ומצורף ומוגה ומאושר אלה פסל הראשונים. ובא זה מאבד את זה. וכבר ידוע מאמר רבי יוסי בפ"ב דכתובות אל תשכן באהליך עולה. זה השווה תוך ביתו ספר שאינו מוגה.

<sup>32</sup> Richardson, *Print Culture in Renaissance Italy*, 3.

“injustice” (*avlah*).<sup>33</sup> While in its original context, R. Yosi’s statement referred specifically to a Torah scroll, it served Luzzatto’s purpose to read the statement more expansively, as a reference to any book containing errors—especially the first edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim*.<sup>34</sup> By contrast, Froben’s edition had been “expurgated, refined, corrected and approved,” all terms editors regularly employed to describe their Sisyphean efforts to produce accurate texts.

Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin has asserted that the meanings of the first three terms lie on a continuum from “censorship” on the one hand, to “the editing and emendation of the text,” on the other. In the early modern period, these processes were interrelated and carried out by the same—Jewish, Christian and formerly Jewish—print shop workers, often at the same time.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, as Grafton has emphasized, early modern editors and correctors who prepared texts for print, regularly engaged in “multiple practices, from those of the textual critic to those of the printer; multiple intellectual traditions, some ancient and others newly created; the threat of religious, political or stylistic censorship; and the need to finish before a deadline.”<sup>36</sup> The wording of Luzzatto’s statement above thus begs the question: Did the words “expurgated, refined, corrected and approved” refer to *both* textual editing *and* censorship?

Indeed, it is difficult to gauge whether Froben’s editors, Luzzatto foremost among them, believed their emendations and expurgations were a credit to the text—as Raz-Krakotzkin might

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<sup>33</sup> Luzzatto’s citation is not quite correct: The Babylonian Talmud (Ketubot 19b) does not ascribe this teaching to any particular tradent. The midrash collection *Yalkut Shimoni*, however, does ascribe it to Rabbi Yosi (§906).

<sup>34</sup> This is a play on the Hebrew word *sefer* which can refer both to a scroll and a book more generally. On the status of uncorrected books more generally, see Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Tefillin, Mezuzah and Torah Scrolls 7:12 and Joseph Karo, *Shulḥan Arukh, Yoreh Deah*, Laws of Torah Scrolls, 379:1.

<sup>35</sup> Raz-Krakotzkin, *The Censor, the Editor and the Text*, 112-114.

<sup>36</sup> Grafton, *The Culture of Correction in Renaissance Europe*, 142.

have us believe—or a necessary evil, required to reprint an important work with the permission of Christian authorities and make it more widely available.<sup>37</sup> No doubt, if readers understood the words “expurgated, refined, corrected” as an admission of censorship, then the text would have been more appealing to Christian Hebraists, including Church scholars seeking new texts upon which to base their conversionary appeals. Perhaps by implying this fact on the title page, Froben sought to attract the interest of this group of readers.<sup>38</sup> However, it is clear that the primary readership to which the edition was directed was Jews, and Jewish “students” (*talmidim*) specifically. Unlike some of Froben’s other publications, which were directed at Christian readers, the title page of *Sefer Ḥasidim* included neither Latin text nor Froben’s printers’ mark.<sup>39</sup>

Moreover, given the disappointment of Jewish readers in Froben’s Talmud, it is difficult to imagine they would have seen the censoring of the text of *Sefer Ḥasidim* as a point in the new edition’s favor. Perhaps then, the terms “expurgated, refined, corrected” could be understood in multiple ways, Janus-like, leading readers to draw different conclusions depending on who they were: Jews could understand them as testimony to the text’s accuracy and Christians might interpret it as testimony to the text’s orthodoxy.

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<sup>37</sup> Raz-Krakotzkin has argued that Jewish editors and censors “collaborated” in censoring Hebrew texts and that they perceived their work as part of a process of establishing “a separated Jewish space” and confirmation of “the right of Jews to preserve their literature and their Law” in Christian society, *The Censor, the Editor and the Text*, 84 and 181.

<sup>38</sup> It is clear they were successful in this regard, as the humanist and Hebraist Isaac Casaubon owned and annotated a copy of the Froben edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim*, Anthony Grafton and Joanna Weinberg. *“I Have Always Loved the Holy Tongue”: Isaac Casaubon, the Jews, and a Forgotten Chapter in Renaissance Scholarship* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011) 55-59, 330.

<sup>39</sup> See Froben’s *Sefer Gan Eden* (1580), a grammar by Marco Marino of Brescia, the inquisitor who expurgated the Froben Talmud, and his biblical concordance, *Meir Nativ*, which was printed in three editions, one explicitly for Christians (1581).

## Ideal Readership

The title page states Froben's new edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* was intended for "students" (*talmidim*). *Sefer Ḥasidim* was just one of Froben's titles directed to this group of young readers. In the introduction to a later Froben publication, *Ohel Ya'akov* (1584), a commentary on the philosopher R. Joseph Albo's *Ikkarim*, the author, R. Jacob b. Samuel Bunim Koppelman (1555-1594), adapted the language of the Passover Haggadah, stating that his book was meant for, "The one who does not know how to ask, and they are the young students (*ha-talmidim ha-ketanim*) who don't know their right from their left."<sup>40</sup> Similarly, in his introduction to *Kavvanot ha-Aggadot*, Luzzatto explained that the purpose of his compendium of *aggadah* was to explicate this misunderstood tradition for "students" (*talmidim*) who lacked a basic familiarity with it and the spiritual wisdom therein.

A few decades earlier, in the introduction to his code of Jewish law, the *Shulḥan Arukh* (1565-1566), R. Joseph Caro wrote that he hoped, "The young students (*ha-talmidim ha-ketanim*) will meditate upon it always and repeat its language orally, so that it might become like what one studies in childhood (*girsah de-yankuta*), ordered in their mouths in their youth, practical *halakhah*, even when they age it will not depart from them...."<sup>41</sup> Drawing on these examples, we might perceive that the second edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* was one of a number of sixteenth-century printed titles primarily directed not to scholars, but to less-experienced learners, young Jewish men who studied in *yeshivot* (academies, seminaries) and *ḥavurot* (confraternities).

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<sup>40</sup> הוא שאינו יודע לשאל. והם התלמידים הקטנים שאינם יודעים בין ימין ושמאל.

The translation is by Marvin J. Heller, "Ambrosius Froben, Israel Zifroni and Hebrew Printing im Freiburg im Breisgau" in *Studies in the Making of the Early Hebrew Book* (Leiden: Brill, 2008) 148.

<sup>41</sup> זאת ועוד, התלמידים הקטנים יהגו בו תמיד וישננו לשונו על פה ותהיה גירסא דינקותא מסודרת בפייהם מקטנותם הלכה למעשה, וגם כי יזקינו לא יסורו ממנו....

Joseph Caro, "Hakdamah" in *Shulḥan arukh* (Jerusalem: Ketuvim, 1992), Bar Ilan Responsa Database.

From late antiquity, the essence of *yeshiva* curriculum was the exposition of the halakhic passages in the Babylonian Talmud in the presence of a reputed master of *halakhah* (*talmid ḥakham*).<sup>42</sup> Several scholars have recently described the changes in the methods and curriculum of this central institution of Jewish communal life during the sixteenth century. Foremost among these were new approaches to halakhic study, such as *pilpul* (talmudic dialectics), and the introduction of new texts, such as the *Shulḥan Arukh* and those of the *kabbalah*.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, Caro's *Shulḥan Arukh*, especially its second edition with R. Moses Isserles's glosses (1578-1580), revolutionized halakhic study, allowing students to discern rulings for themselves without having to sort through competing precedents in an increasingly unwieldy halakhic library and without having to seek the opinion of local rabbinic decisors.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, the availability of kabbalistic texts in print meant that students had access to the most esoteric works of Jewish tradition without the

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<sup>42</sup> While the literature on the history of Jewish scholarship is voluminous, there is no definitive history of the early modern *yeshivah*, reflections on the *yeshiva* curriculum may be found in Mordechai Breuer, *Oholei Torah: ha-yeshivah tavnitah ve-toldoteha* (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 2003) 83-165. See also, Jacob Katz, *Tradition and Crisis: Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages*, trans. Bernard Dov Cooperman (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000) 185-199; Robert Bonfil, *Rabbis and Jewish Communities in Renaissance Italy*, trans. Jonathan Chipman (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1990) 19-25; Jacob Elbaum, *Petihut ve-histagrut: ha-yezirah ha-ruḥanit ha-sifrutit be-polin u-ve-arzot ashkenaz be-shilhei ha-me'ah ha-shesh esreh* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1990); Eric Zimmer, *Gaḥaltan shel ḥakhamim: perakim be-toldot ha-rabbanut be-germanyah ba-me'ah ha-shesh-esreh u-va-me'ah ha-sheva esreh* (Be'er Sheva, Israel: Ben Gurion University of the Negev, 1999); Marjorie Lehman, *The En Yaaqov: Jacob Ibn Habib's Search for Faith in the Talmud Corpus* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2012) 3-5, 100-115.

<sup>43</sup> See Jacob Elbaum, *Petihut ve-histagrut*; Robert Bonfil, *Rabbis and Jewish Communities*; Elchanan Reiner, "Temurot be-yeshivot polin ve-ashkenaz be-me'ot ha-16-17 ve-ha-viku'ah al ha-pilpul" in *Studies in Jewish Culture in Honor of Chone Shmeruk*, eds. Israel Bartal, Ezra Mendelsohn, and Chava Turniansky (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center for Jewish History, 1993) 9-80.

<sup>44</sup> Elchanan Reiner, "The Ashkenazi Elite at the Beginning of the Modern Era: Manuscript Versus Printed Book" in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewish History*, vol. 10, ed. Gershon David Hundert (London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1997) 85-98, Joseph Davis, "The Reception of the *Shulḥan 'Arukh* and the Formation of Ashkenazic Jewish Identity," *AJS Review* 26, no. 2 (2002): 252-76; Joseph A. Skloot, "Blood and Guts in Jewish Law: The Laws of the Forbidden and the Permitted and Religious Norms in Rabbi Moses Isserles' Glosses on the *Shulḥan Arukh*" delivered at the "Norms and Normativity in History" conference at the Paris-Sorbonne University, March, 2010.

permission of senior scholars.<sup>45</sup> Elhanan Reiner has even asserted that the printing and proliferation of kabbalistic texts during the sixteenth century led to “the emergence of the secondary intelligentsia in Ashkenazi society,” that is, a group of Jewish scholars who rejected Talmud study in favor of *kabbalah* exclusively.<sup>46</sup> At the same time, Jacob ibn Ḥabib’s anthology of talmudic *aggadot*, the *Ein Ya'akov* (1516)—printed first in Salonica but rapidly disseminated in central and eastern Europe—sought to refocus the standard *yeshivah* curriculum away from the talmudic *halakhah* toward *aggadah*.<sup>47</sup>

The sixteenth century also witnessed the rising prominence of *ḥavurot* as fixtures of Jewish communal life, especially in Italy.<sup>48</sup> These institutions served varied purposes, from dowering brides to collecting charity, from caring for the dying to practicing early-morning pietistic rituals. The proliferation of *ḥavurot* mirrored the parallel growth of confraternities among sixteenth-century Christians and their visibility in Italian civic life.<sup>49</sup> One important role of *ḥavurot*—which

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<sup>45</sup> Elchanan Reiner, “A Biography of an Agent of Culture: Eliezer Altschul of Prague and His Literary Activity” in *Schöpferische Momente des europäischen Judentums in der frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Michael Graetz (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 2000) 229–247.

<sup>46</sup> Reiner, “A Biography of an Agent of Culture,” 246.

<sup>47</sup> Lehman, *The En Yaaqov*, 51–174.

<sup>48</sup> Elliot Horowitz, “Processions, Piety and Jewish Confraternities” in *The Jews of Early Modern Venice*, eds. Robert C. Davis and Benjamin Ravid (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001) 231. Two confraternities emerged in Rome in 1539 devoted to Torah study and others emerged later in the century. Leon Modena stated that Venice had the most Jewish confraternities, quoted in Horowitz, “Processions, Piety and Jewish Confraternities,” 240. See also, Elliot Horowitz, “Coffee, Coffeehouses, and the Nocturnal Rituals of Early Modern Jewry,” *AJS Review* 14, no. 1 (Spring 1989): 30–38; Elliot Horowitz, “Yeshiva and *Hevra*: Educational Control and Confraternal Organization in Sixteenth-Century Italy” in *Sefer yovel li-Shelomo Simonson: kovetz meḥkarim le-toldot ha-yehudim be-yemei ha-beinayim u-ve-tekufat ha-Renesans* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 2017) 123–147; Michela Andreatta, “The Printing of Devotion in Seventeenth-Century Italy: Prayer Books Printed for the Shomrim La-Boker Confraternities” in *The Hebrew Book in Early Modern Italy*, eds. Joseph R. Hacker and Adam Shear (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011) 156–170;

<sup>49</sup> Elliot Horowitz, “Processions, Piety and Jewish Confraternities,” 230–236. See Natalie Z. Davis, “Some Tasks and These in the Study of Popular Religion” in *The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion*, eds. Charles Trinkaus and Heiko Oberman (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 314–326, who notes the distinction between confraternities for adults and adolescents.

overlapped at times with *yeshivot*—was the education of young boys and men—referred to as *talmidim*, *bahurim* or *ne'arim* (youths, adolescents).<sup>50</sup> As Elliot Horowitz has shown, *havurot* often functioned like “boarding schools” where students *and* teachers were confined, studying and residing together, unable to leave except for rare interludes. Aside from the study of texts, which made up much of the day, students also received frequent instruction moral matters and proper comportment. The purpose of such an environment was as much to instill religious discipline as cultivate scholarship—and to protect young men from “the temptations of the street.”<sup>51</sup> Roni Weinstein has shown that *havurot* also became an important site of the dissemination of *kabbalah* and even produced their own—often kabbalistic—pamphlets and liturgies to serve their educational and devotional needs.<sup>52</sup>

In this context then, it seems likely that R. Jacob Luzzatto hoped Froben’s new edition of *Sefer Hasidim* would serve as a resource for students studying in *havurot*. Indeed, as we have seen, the text of *Sefer Hasidim* is replete with moral and behavioral guidance, touching topics as varied as avoiding oaths to kindness to animals.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, writing in his introduction to *Kavanot ha-Aggadot*, Luzzatto made clear that that book was meant to fill the aggadic lacuna in

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<sup>50</sup> Horowitz, “Yeshiva and *Hevra*,” 142.

<sup>51</sup> Horowitz, “Yeshiva and *Hevra*,” 140, 127-130.

<sup>52</sup> Roni Weinstein, *Kabbalah and Jewish Modernity* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2016) 94-96; “Ma karah ha-na’ar Shemuel be-pinkaso ishi? ḥinukh na’arim yehudim be-Italia be-mahalakh ha-Reformaziah ha-katolit,” *Italia* 13 (2001): 131–168.

<sup>53</sup> See, for example, §419 and §670. See also, David Shyovitz, “Beauty and the Bestiary: Animals, Wonder, and Polemic in Medieval Ashkenaz” in *The Jewish-Christian Encounter in Medieval Preaching*, eds. Jonathan Adams and Jussi Hanska (London: Routledge, 2015), 215-39.



students' education, important material that was not being studied in the *yeshivah*. He may have thought of *Sefer Ḥasidim* similarly.<sup>54</sup>

There are also some grounds for the supposition that Froben's edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* was intended for students in Poland, specifically. It has been suggested that this was the case with Froben's Talmud edition.<sup>55</sup> Indeed, after the Talmud project was complete and after transferring his press to the town of Freiburg im Breisgau, Froben released a number of titles in Yiddish, including translations of R. Jonah Gerondi's *Ḥayei Olam* (1583) and the *targum* to the Five Scrolls (1584). Moreover, the third edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* was printed in Lublin, for Polish Jews, in 1581. It is plausible that Froben's *Sefer Ḥasidim* was also intended for these readers too—though, there are no direct references to Ashkenazi Jewish culture in any of its accompanying paratexts.<sup>56</sup>

## Introductions

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<sup>54</sup> The fact that Froben's *Sefer Ḥasidim* was directed to young students does not exclude the fact that it would have been of interest to more seasoned and senior scholars, of course. Indeed, these men were often at the helm of the educational confraternities and they would likely have found the work useful in cultivating proper patterns of thought and behavior.

<sup>55</sup> Heinrich Pallmann, "Ambrosius Froben von Basel als Drucker des Talmud," *Archiv für Geschichte des Deutschen Buchhandels* 7 (1882): 48; Fausto Parente, "The Index, the Holy Office and the Condemnation of the Talmud and Publication of Clement VIII's Index" in *Church, Censorship and Culture in Early Modern Italy*. Edited by Gigliola Fragnito, translated by Adrian Belton, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 172. Most draw this inference from Simon's connections as a bookseller to Poland's Jews.

<sup>56</sup> By the sixteenth century, the Jewish population in Poland was already especially large and prosperous, with burgeoning institutions of learning throughout the kingdom. Though, ironically, as will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter, Froben's editors removed many Judeo-German words and phrases from the book. On the cultural relationship between Central European Jews, especially Italian Jews, and Polish Jews, see Elbaum, "Kishrei tarbut bein yehudei Polin."

Two introductions follow the title page. These documents also serve to, in Genette's words, provide "a better reception of the text and a more pertinent reading of it."<sup>57</sup> The first introduction makes the case for the superiority of the new edition, on account of the former edition's manifold errors. The second introduction is more interesting: It seeks to clarify R. Judah he-Ḥasid's relationship to the text, depicting him as an editor or compiler rather than an author. It portrays *Sefer Ḥasidim* as scripture and akin to venerable collections of *aggadah*, long-forgotten and much-damaged in the vicissitudes of its transmission. Characterizing *Sefer Ḥasidim* in this way was novel. The printers of the first edition and R. Abraham b. Moses ha-Cohen had no qualms about the text's medieval features; Judah merely used the "customary phraseology" of his own day. The editors of the second edition believed these were interpolations that detracted from *Sefer Ḥasidim*'s classical character.

A.M. Habermann asserted that Israel Zifroni composed both introductions.<sup>58</sup> In contrast, I assert they were composed by R. Jacob Luzzatto. It is certain Luzzatto was deeply involved in the production of the book. Luzzatto's anthology of *aggadah*, *Kavvanot ha-Aggadot*, was printed almost simultaneously with *Sefer Ḥasidim* and included excerpts from it. We know too that Luzzatto wrote the introduction to *Kavvanot ha-Aggadot*; he is explicitly credited with it. And, most importantly, both the introductions to *Sefer Ḥasidim* and the introduction to *Kavvanot ha-Aggadot* share literary features.<sup>59</sup> In particular, they contain lengthy passages written in short phrases, divided with apostrophes, in staccato verse. They also employ the same verbal tropes: They

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<sup>57</sup> Genette, *Paratexts*, 2.

<sup>58</sup> Habermann did not offer evidence, see A. M. Habermann, "Ha-madpis Yisrael ha-Zifroni u-beno Elishama" In *Perakim be-toldot ha-madpisim ha-ivri'im ve-inyanei sefarim* (Jerusalem: Reuven Mass, 1978) 237.

<sup>59</sup> *Kavvanot ha-Aggadot* (Basel, 1880) 4b.

describe the accompanying works as “precious fruits,” a reference to Song of Songs 4:13; they lament the present lack of industry among Jewish students using the rabbinic expression, they “did not achieve sufficient study”; and they describe the subject of their accompanying texts with the expression “on this path the axis [of the book] revolves.”<sup>60</sup>

Full transcriptions and annotated translations of these introductions may be found in appendices C and D.

### Hasdei Crescas

One of the most intriguing features of the second introduction is the presence of three lengthy, unattributed quotations from the philosopher Hasdei Crescas’ treatise *Or Adonai* (written in 1410, but printed for the first time in Ferrara in 1555). Luzzatto used these quotations to provide an etiological and religious-philosophical underpinning for the new edition of *Sefer Hasidim*. Below, I have annotated the section of the second introduction containing the three quotations. I differentiate these quotations with italic, bold and bold-italic type:<sup>61</sup>

We must praise the God of Israel who *in the greatness of His lovingkindness and the abundance of His goodness, from the place of His habitation looked forth, and did choose the House of Jacob that His glory might dwell amongst them, that they might love and fear Him and serve Him and adhere unto Him, for this is the ultimate human happiness concerning which many of them who are wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight have been perplexed and have walked along*

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<sup>60</sup> The Hebrew phrase in question from Song of Songs is “פרי מגדים.” The rabbinic expression (“ולא שימשו את רביהן כל” “צורכן”) is found in multiple places in rabbinic literature, for instance in PT Hagiga 10b, it is used to describe the first disputes that emerged between the houses of Hillel and Shammai. The final expression is “סובב על קוטב.”

<sup>61</sup> For these quotations, I have followed the translation in Warren Zev Harvey, “Hasdai Crescas’s Critique of the Theory of the Acquired Intellect” (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1973) 342-367. That said, Crescas’s prose is composed of many quotations and allusions biblical and rabbinic passages—a common feature of medieval Hebrew. I have purposely determined not to cite the many biblical verses quoted and alluded to, since this would make the text especially cumbersome. They can be easily identified, however, by referring directly to Harvey’s translation. Biblical quotations and allusions in Luzzatto’s own words, however, are identified fully.

in darkness.<sup>62</sup> *He prepared<sup>63</sup> the way for us, the way of life, which without them would be very distant, who could find it, unless there shined upon his countenance the true light, which is<sup>64</sup> radiance of the Shekhinah.<sup>65</sup> The rock from which we were hewn, a tried stone, the foundation stone on which<sup>66</sup> the world<sup>67</sup> was founded, he is<sup>68</sup> Abraham our Father, peace be upon him, who<sup>69</sup> at three years of age, knew his Creator, and from the day he attained reason, called many with him to His service<sup>70</sup>* may he be blessed. Also, after him, he commanded his sons to observe the path of the Lord and his teachings (*toratav*), as it is written, “For I have singled him out, so that he might instruct his children and his posterity to keep the way of the Lord...” (Genesis 18:19). And as it is written regarding Solomon, peace be upon him, “Know the God of your father, and serve Him...” (1 Chronicles 28:9). Thus, generation after generation fathers will take hold of their children, and adults will warn children to keep the Torah of the Lord and its laws and its commandments (after Deuteronomy 6:2), its fences, its ordinances and its decrees. The rabbi to his students, they would transmit short principles, orally, through well known mnemonic devices (*simanim yedu'im*), as it says, “Put it in their mouths...” (Deuteronomy 31:19). When **troubles prevailed**

<sup>62</sup> This is a direct quotation from the Ferrara edition of *Or Adonai* with no modifications:

בגודל חסדו ורב טובו ממכון שבתו השגיה ויבחר בבית יעקב לשכון כבוד בתוכם לאהב' וליראה אותו לעבדו ולדבקה בו אשר הוא תכלית ההשגחה האנושית אשר נבוכו בה רבים ובחשכה יתהלכו מהחכמים בעיניהם ונגד פניהם נבונים....

<sup>63</sup> Here Luzzatto changes the quotation to read, “He prepared,” rather than “to prepare,” in Crescas’s original formulation.

<sup>64</sup> Luzzatto shortens the phrasing, changing “which is called” to “which is.”

<sup>65</sup> Harvey interprets this last sentence as a question, though that is not clear from the original context and does not accord with the way Luzzatto edited this passage to begin with “He prepared” not “to prepare.” I have modified Harvey’s translation here leaving “*Shekhinah*”—the physical manifestation of God—untranslated. Harvey employed the word, “Indwelling.”

<sup>66</sup> Here, Luzzatto switches the gender of the preposition “on which” from feminine (the correct gender) to the masculine.

<sup>67</sup> Luzzatto corrects an error in the Ferrara text of *Or Ammim* where the word עולם (“world”) is rendered עולה.

<sup>68</sup> The original text is slightly more verbose, reading והוא אשר היה rather than הוא.

<sup>69</sup> The original text inserts the parenthetical phrase, “without having the Law before him.”

<sup>70</sup> This is the text from *Or Adonai* in the Ferrara edition with variations from the Luzzatto’s text in bold:

להכין לנו את הדרך דרך החיים אשר בלעדיהם רחוק רחוק מי ימצאנו אם לא זרח על פניו האור האמתי אשר יכונה בזיו השכינה הוא הצור אשר ממנו חוצבנו אבן בוחן אבן השתיה אשר ממנו הושתת העילה [כך] אשר היה אברהם אבינו עליו השלום אשר בזולת תורה קדמותו בן ג' שנים שעמד על דעתו הכיר את בוראו קרב רבים לעבודתו....

Compare with Luzzatto’s text:

והכין לנו את הדרך דרך החיים אשר בלעדיהם רחוק רחוק מי ימצאנו אם לא זרח על פניו האור האמתי הוא אור זיו השכינה הוא הצור אשר ממנו חוצבנו אבן בוחן אבן השתיה אשר ממנו הושתת העולם והוא אברהם אבינו ע"ה אשר בן ג' שנים הכיר את בוראו ויום עמד על דעתו קרא רבים אתו לעבודתו ית'.

Luzzatto seems to have misread the verb “brought near” as “called”—a reasonable error as the letters of the verbs are similar, but doing so required a modification of the other terms, changing “brought many near to His service” to “called many with him to the service of the Blessed One.”

**upon us,**<sup>71</sup> and the exiles multiplied, forgetfulness (*shokhaḥot*) became frequent, and **the disputes** and opinions **multiplied** among the<sup>72</sup> **students who did not achieve sufficient study, and some of them used to permit themselves to write in a book some of what they had received** from the mouths of their rabbis<sup>73</sup>, **and they would call [such books] a “scroll of orders” (*megillat sedarim*).**<sup>74</sup> Some of them [are called] a “sequestered scroll” (*megillat setarim*).

From the third quotation above, we can discern that Luzzatto came to know *Or Adonai* through the 1555 first printed edition. The quotation above concludes, “They would call [such books] a ‘scroll of orders’ (*megillat sedarim*)” (see figure six). The latter sentence contains a typographical error. The proper rabbinic term for students’ notebooks is *megillot setarim*, literally “sequestered scrolls,” as Luzzatto indicates in the subsequent sentence.<sup>75</sup> I have not found instances of the expression “scroll of orders” (*megillat sedarim*) in any ancient, medieval or early modern Hebrew text—except in the Ferrara *editio princeps* of *Or Adonai* and Luzzatto’s introduction to Froben’s *Sefer Ḥasidim*.<sup>76</sup> The transmission of this error to the introduction and Luz-

<sup>71</sup> The original text reads, “When the hand of the Greeks prevailed, and troubles came frequently upon Israel” which Luzzatto seems to have condensed, perhaps to make the reference seem more general and less focused on the influence of Hellenism in antiquity.

<sup>72</sup> These clauses are interpolated by Luzzatto. Perhaps they are a reference to the recent Spanish expulsion, also possibly to make sense of the Ferrara text which is somewhat jumbled:

התלמידים שלא שמעו כל צר כן רבו המחלוקות.

<sup>73</sup> This is perhaps implied in the original, but Luzzatto makes it explicit.

<sup>74</sup> כאשר גברו הצרות עלינו והרבו הגליות ותכפו השכחות ורבו המחלוקות והדיעות בין התלמידיי שלא שמעו כל צרכן והיו קצתם מתירין לעצמן לכתוב בספר מה שהיו מקבלין מפי רבותיה וקורין להן מגילת סדרים.

The original Ferrara text reads (see figure six):

כאשר גברה יד היונים ותכפו הצרות על ישראל אחרי אנשי כנסת הגדולה ורבו התלמידים שלא שמעו כל צר כן רבו המחלוקות והיו קצתם מתירין לעצמן לכתוב בספר מה שהיו מקבלים וקורין לבם מגילת סדרים....

<sup>75</sup> BT Shabbat 6b and Rashi’s commentary thereon. On the history of this term, especially in the Geonic context, see also Talya Fishman, *Becoming the People of the Talmud: Oral Torah as Written Tradition in Medieval Jewish Cultures* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011) 51-52.

<sup>76</sup> The difference between the proper expression and the erroneous one is, of course, a matter of single consonant: The second character of *sedarim* is a *dalet* and the second character of *setarim* is a *tav*. The typesetters in Usque’s printing house likely confused these characters.

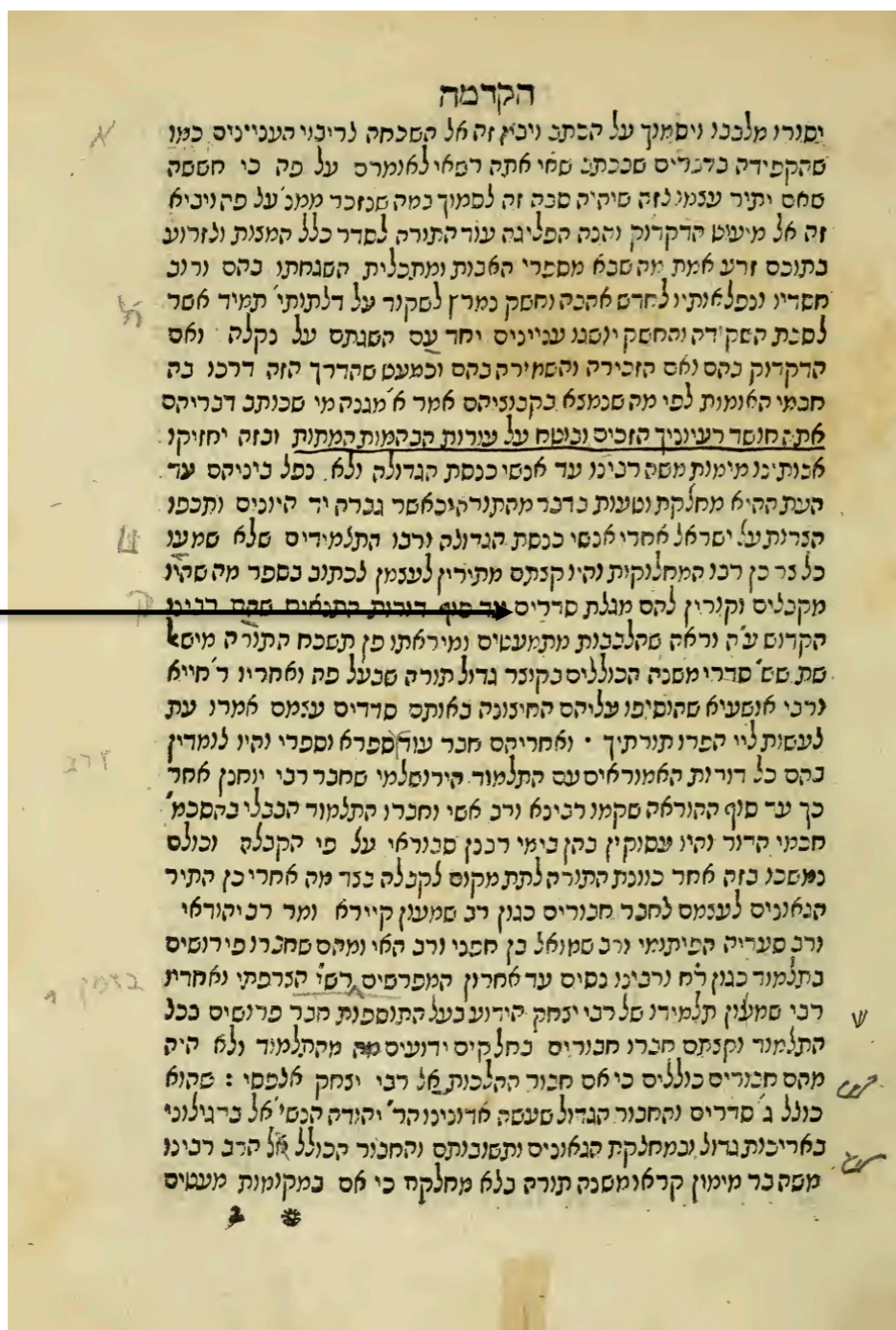


Figure 6

A Page from Hasdai Crescas' introduction to *Or Adonai* (Ferrara, 1555)  
The erroneous phrase "*megillat sedarim*" is marked above with an arrow.

Courtesy of the Robert D. Farber University Archives & Special Collections Department,  
Brandeis University

zatto's attempted correction indicates that Luzzatto relied on the *editio princeps* of *Or Adonai* and not a manuscript copy.<sup>77</sup>

Given that the quotations above are not attributed, it seems unlikely that readers would have recognized that the text originated from some other source; *Or Adonai* was only recently printed and Crescas's works were known only to a limited circle of philosophers.<sup>78</sup> The fact that Luzzatto did not cite his source is striking but not unprecedented. Since antiquity, Jewish literature has maintained, in Shmuel Shpigel's characterization, "multi-layered-anthological character."<sup>79</sup> Citation of sources did not necessarily require attribution despite the well-known rabbinic dictum that citing the source of one's teaching hastens the world to come (M Avot 6:6). But, without attribution, what purpose did these quotations serve?

### ***Or Adonai***

Crescas's *Or Adonai* was a polemic against intermingling of Aristotelean philosophy and Judaism, as formulated in Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed* and *Mishneh Torah*. In Crescas's

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<sup>77</sup> Indeed, it is even possible that Zifroni worked with Usque at Ferrara. Zifroni's name appears for the first time in Vincenzo Conti's publications of 1556 at Cremona, only about 200 kilometers west of Ferrara. We do not know what Zifroni was doing prior to 1556 and where he learned his trade.

<sup>78</sup> Aviezer Ravitzky's comment that Crescas's "teachings were formulated both too late and too early"—that is, "too early" to have had access to the scientific data that would ultimately disprove Aristotelian cosmology, on the one hand, and "too late" given Maimonides prominence in the pantheon of Jewish scholars had already crystallized—is often quoted by his contemporary students of Jewish philosophy, see Hava Tirosh-Rothschild [Samuelson], "Jewish Philosophy on the Eve of Modernity" in *Routledge History of World Philosophies: History of Jewish Philosophy*, eds. Oliver Leaman and Daniel H. Frank (Florence, KY: Routledge, 1997) 502 and Daniel J. Lasker, "Chasdai Crescas" in *History of Jewish Philosophy*, eds. Oliver Leaman and Daniel H Frank (London: Routledge, 1997) 345.

<sup>79</sup> Shpigel, Ya'akov Shmuel. *Amudim be-toldot ha-sefer ha-ivri: haggahot u-mehigim*, vol. 2 (Ramat-Gan, Israel: Bar Ilan University, 2005) 311. According to Margreta De Grazia, the concept marking off and attributing quoted text emerged only in the modern period, "Sanctioning Voice: Quotation Marks, the Abolition of Torture, and the Fifth Amendment" in *The Construction of Authorship: Textual Appropriation in Law and Literature*, eds. Martha Woodmansee and Peter Jaszi (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994) 281–302. Indeed, as we have observed in chapter two, the reuse of a particular text—often without attribution—marked its canonicity. See also Michael Mar-mur, *Abraham Joshua Heschel and the Sources of Wonder* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016) 17–18.

view, Maimonides had taught that the basic philosophical principles undergirding Jewish law and practice were the same as those of Aristotelian physics and metaphysics. In his words, “From their [the Greeks’] weak premises, he [Maimonides] made columns and foundations to the mysteries of the Law, in his book which he called the *Guide of the Perplexed*.”<sup>80</sup> To remedy this error, Crescas sought to explain the “roots and fundamentals upon which the Law in its totality rests” without recourse to a foreign philosophical tradition.<sup>81</sup>

Moreover, Maimonides had asserted that the benefit of living according to the Jewish system of commandments (*mizvot*) was that they created the necessary context, both psychological and political, allowing philosophers to study and discern the truth. The commandments were thus a means to an end. Crescas attacked this view, however, as both “excessively intellectual,” to paraphrase Hava Tirosh-Samuelson, and a denigration of Jewish rituals and practices.<sup>82</sup> Crescas, in contrast to Maimonides, ascribed both personal and universal meaning to the performance of the commandments. They were essential for human happiness and immortality. In his words, “The performance of the commandments brings about this perfection [of man].”<sup>83</sup> Crescas thus formulated a new Jewish philosophy in direct opposition to Maimonides, vindicating Jewish particularism and making Jewish law and practice ends in themselves.

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<sup>80</sup> Hasdai ibn Crescas, introduction to *Sefer Or Adonai* (Ferrara, 1555) unpaginated. Translation is that of Harvey, “Hasdai Crescas’s Critique,” 363.

<sup>81</sup> Crescas, introduction to *Sefer Or Adonai*, unpaginated. Translation according to Harvey, “Hasdai Crescas’s Critique,” 365.

<sup>82</sup> Tirosh-Rothschild [Samuelson], “Jewish Philosophy,” 500.

<sup>83</sup> Crescas, introduction to *Sefer Or Adonai*, unpaginated. Translated by Harvey, “Hasdai Crescas’s Critique,” 347.



Crescas's arguments against Maimonides, while not especially influential in their own day, foreshadowed a signal debate in Italian Jewish scholarly circles in the sixteenth century.<sup>84</sup> Bonfil has identified a pervasive "dissatisfaction" with rationalistic, Maimonidean philosophy among Italian scholars who perceived in it a "failure...to give to man the consciousness of his individual spiritual uniqueness, and to the Jew the sense of uniqueness involved in his commitment...to the system of observance of the precepts of the Torah...."<sup>85</sup> The lengthy quotations from *Or Adonai* in the introduction to Froben's *Sefer Ḥasidim* can be understood as an attempt to contextualize *Sefer Ḥasidim* as an anti-rationalistic work that spoke to the particular hunger of some Italian Jews for the particularism and ritualism earlier articulated by Crescas.

### **Context and Purpose**

Following the persecutions of Iberian Jewry in 1391, Crescas intended to help his co-religionists reaffirm their commitment to the commandments in an halakhic manual he planned to write, entitled *Ner Miẓvah*. While this work never materialized, in *Or Adonai*, Crescas reflected on the need for such a work because the observance of the commandments necessitated "precision with regard to them," "easy apprehension," and "preservation and remembrance." This last principle was the reason, Crescas asserted, that "sequestered scrolls" were necessary because they helped them keep track of and explicate the system of Jewish religious obligations.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> On Crescas's limited influence among his contemporaries and successors, see Lasker, "Chasdai Crescas," 336 and 345.

<sup>85</sup> Robert Bonfil, *Rabbis and Jewish Communities*, 289; Tirosh-Rothschild [Samuelson], "Jewish Philosophy," 501-528.

<sup>86</sup> Harvey, "Hasdai Crescas's Critique," 348. I would like to express my gratitude to Roslyn Weiss for sharing her unpublished translation of this text as well.

For Luzzatto, the content *Sefer Hasidim* mirrored *Or Adonai* and its unrealized halakhic companion. The book was replete with practical advice on how to live a pious Jewish life according to the *mizvot* and a justification of that mode of life. In Luzzatto's words, "In it, it includes the root of the commandments and their branches and the branches of their branches in simple interpretations (*p'shatim*), pleasant and honorable, with every luscious fruit (Song of Songs 4:13). And ethical teachings and rebuke for the collective and the individual, with awe-inspiring and marvelous tales."<sup>87</sup> This purpose was explicitly stated in *Sefer Hasidim*'s first pericope: "Thus, *Sefer Hasidim* was written for the sake of those who fear Him, those who fear the Lord, and all people who return to their Creator wholeheartedly, that they might know and understand what is incumbent upon them to do and what is incumbent upon them to beware."<sup>88</sup> While *Or Adonai* and *Sefer Hasidim* emerged from radically different cultural milieux, both texts were concerned with the essential question of what one should do and what one should beware—the transcendent significance of religious behavior.

*Sefer Hasidim*'s religious and moral guidance was especially necessary in the late-sixteenth century, Luzzatto argued. While *Or Adonai* was composed in the shadow of the apostasy of Iberian Jewry in 1391—which, Crescas believed was facilitated by their acceptance of the tenets of Greek philosophy—Luzzatto appropriated Crescas' words to suggest that his age was little different. Like the Jews of fourteenth-century Iberia, Luzzatto's co-religionists, "know not, neither do they understand; They go about in darkness; All the foundations of the earth are moved" (Psalms 82:5) and "Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, And prudent in their

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<sup>87</sup> בו כלל עקר המצוות וענפיהם וענפי ענפיהם בפשטים נעימים ונכבדים. עם כל פרי מגדים. ודברי מוסר ותוכחה לרבים ויחידים. עם מעשים נוראים ונפלאים....

<sup>88</sup> לכך נכתב ספר חסידים למען יראו בו יראי ה' וכל השבים לבוראם בלב שלם וידעו ויבינו מה שעליהן לעשות ומאיזה דבר צריכין לזהר

own sight!” (Isaiah 5:21). While the cause of the dismal spiritual state of fourteenth-century Jewry was Greek philosophy, Luzzatto identified other problems in his own day: “The exiles multiplied, forgetfulness (*shokhaḥot*) became frequent, and the disputes and opinions multiplied.”

The term “exiles” (*galuyot*) is general, but could be interpreted as a reference to the Spanish expulsion and to other more recent expulsions, such as Pope Pius V’s expulsion of the Jews of the Papal States.<sup>89</sup> The word translated here as “forgetfulness” (*shokhaḥot*) is part of a tradition of stock expressions testifying to Jewish scholarly decline in Second Temple times. It is attested, infrequently, along the phrases “disputes multiplied” and “students who did not achieve sufficient study” in medieval and early modern texts.<sup>90</sup> However, one is tempted to speculate that this term was also a reference to the wholesale loss of Jewish knowledge through the condemnation and burning of the Talmud and other Hebrew books in Italy during the 1550s. Jews feared the destruction of this textual patrimony would provoke a kind of cultural amnesia.<sup>91</sup> Luzzatto thus reworked Crescas’s statement and used it to proclaim the relevance of *Sefer Ḥasidim*’s religious wisdom in another age of persecution.

*Sefer Ḥasidim*’s religious guidance, moreover, was not merely of practical benefit. According to Crescas, as quoted by Luzzatto, the performance of the commandments led to the “ultimate human happiness.” The commandments were “the path (*derekh*) for us, the path of life” leading to “radiance of the Shekhinah.” The phrase “radiance of the Shekhinah” is found often in

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<sup>89</sup> Kenneth R. Stow, *Alienated Minority: The Jews of Medieval Latin Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009) 304.

<sup>90</sup> See Yair Bacharach, *Havot Ya’ir* (Lemberg, 1894), responsum 192, in the Bar Ilan Responsa database.

<sup>91</sup> See the chronicler Joseph ha-Cohen’s testimony about the burnings, *Emek ha-bakhah* (Krakow: M. Letteris, 1895) 128-129; Kenneth R. Stow, “The Burning of the Talmud in 1553, in Light of Sixteenth-Century Catholic Attitudes Toward the Talmud.” *Bibliothèque d’Humanisme Et Renaissance* 34, no. 3 (1972): 438-439.

rabbinic literature where it is synonymous with God's numinous presence in "spatio-temporal" terms.<sup>92</sup> However, Maimonides transformed this phrase into a synonym for the "acquired intellect," that is, the substance of true knowledge transferred from God to the individual in the process of cognition. According to Zev Harvey, Crescas rejected this definition, believing that illumination by the "radiance of the Shekhinah" was not merely a cognitive experience, but rather a spiritual one whereby the individual's soul united with God in an act of love and devotion.<sup>93</sup> Human beings expressed this love by enacting the system of the commandments—the "path of life."

We find a similar concept in *Sefer Hasidim*. §300, for example, enumerates the reward for living a pious life:

[God] gave [humankind] freedom to do good or evil and desired that they shall do His will without seeking a reward. Regarding those who love the pleasures of the world and those who fear for providential punishment, the Holy Blessed One says, "Do My will in order that it will be good for you and your children forever, and there are words of rebuke if you do not do My will." However, regarding one who does [God's bidding] out of love, he does not specify (lit. say) their reward, because their reward is infinite.<sup>94</sup>

For Luzzatto, *Sefer Hasidim* represented an access point where Jews—more often than not, in Crescas's words, "perplexed" and walking "along in darkness"—could once again learn to love and serve God and thereby acquire their transcendent reward. This point is emphasized further in the first quotation from *Or Adonai* that Luzzatto cited: God "in the greatness of His lovingkindness and the abundance of His goodness, from the place of His habitation looked forth, and did

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<sup>92</sup> See *Encyclopedia Judaica*, s.v. "Shekhinah," as well as BT Berakhot 17a and 64a.

<sup>93</sup> Harvey, "Hasdai Crescas's Critique," 187-8.

<sup>94</sup> לפי שנתן רשות לעשות טוב ורע וחפץ שיעשו רצונו על מנת שלא לקבל פרס אלא כנגד האוהבים הנאות העולם והיראי מפני הפורענות אמר הב"ה עשו רצוני כדי שייטב לכם ולבניכם לעולם ודברי תוכחות אם לא תעשו רצוני אבל כנגד העושים מאהבה לא אמר שכרם כי אין קץ לשכרם

choose the House of Jacob that His glory might dwell amongst them, that they might love and fear Him and serve Him and adhere unto Him.” The term “glory” here is roughly equivalent to the “radiance of the Shekhinah” above. Both are expressions for the physical presence of God residing with the Jewish people—“the House of Jacob.”

Hava Tirosh-Samuelson has argued that “Crescas’ emphasis on actual performance of the commandments had a clear anti-Christian message: “The road to personal immortality lies not in holding certain views but in the performance of specific acts which Israel alone is commanded to do.”<sup>95</sup> At a time of increased anxiety, when Jews—and their literature—in Roman Catholic domains were subject to new forms of persecution, Luzzatto depicted *Sefer Ḥasidim* as a work which could, following Crescas’s example (in Bonfil’s words) restore to the Jewish people a sense of their “spiritual uniqueness” by teaching them the proper fulfillment of the commandments.<sup>96</sup>

### **Etiology**

Luzzatto also appropriated Crescas’s words to establish etiology for *Sefer Ḥasidim*. *Sefer Ḥasidim* was, according to Luzzatto, one of the aforementioned students’ notebooks or “sequestered scrolls” (*megillot setarim*):

The rabbi to his students, they would transmit short principles, orally, through well known mnemonic devices (*simanim yedu'im*), as it says, “Put it in their mouths...” (Deuteronomy 31:19). When troubles prevailed upon us, and the exiles multiplied, forgetfulness (*shokhahot*) became frequent, and the disputes and opinions multiplied among the students who did not achieve sufficient study, and some of them used to permit themselves to write in a book some of what they had re-

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<sup>95</sup> Tirosh-Rothschild, “Jewish Philosophy,” 502.

<sup>96</sup> Bonfil, *Rabbis and Jewish Communities*, 289.

ceived from the mouths of their rabbis, and they would call [such books] a “scroll of orders” (*megillat sedarim*). Some of them [are called] a “sequestered scroll” (*megillat setarim*).

The quotation above, taken from *Or Adonai*, cites a longstanding Jewish tradition that communal stress nullified the prohibition against writing down oral traditions.<sup>97</sup> Luzzatto’s use of it here was meant to characterize *Sefer Ḥasidim* as a “very ancient book” (*sefer yashan noshan*) composed of teachings scholars had originally transmitted to their students orally. Because of the vicissitudes of history, however, they were ultimately forced to preserve them in writing.<sup>98</sup> Luzzatto goes even further, however, equating *Sefer Ḥasidim* with Scripture. He remarks, for example, that the text was “written with a Godly finger” (*katuv ba-ezbah elohi*).<sup>99</sup> This phrase is derived from a twice repeated statement in the Pentateuch about the Sinaitic stone tablets which were “written by God’s finger” (*ketuvim ba-ezbah Elohim*).<sup>100</sup> Luzzatto reiterates this association between the stone tablets and *Sefer Ḥasidim* a few sentences later, comparing *Sefer Ḥasidim* to the two sets of stone tablets—one smashed by Moses and one intact—which, according to rabbinic tradition, were stored together in the Ark of the Covenant (BT Beraḥot 8a). The Babylonian Talmud—which contains the earliest reference to this tradition—equates the broken tablets to “a sage who has forgotten his learning through no fault of his own.” Just as the tablet fragments

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<sup>97</sup> BT Temurah 14b and Sherira Gaon, *Letter of Rav Sherira Gaon*, ed. D. Metzger (Jerusalem: Neve Asher Institute, 1998) §17-19, Bar Ilan Responsa Database. This tradition was also used to justify the printing of kabbalistic books during the early modern period.

<sup>98</sup> Of course, the phrases “very ancient” and “days of the pious ones” do not refer to specific times. “Very ancient” is a stock expression that dates to the Bible (Lev. 26:10). Interestingly, I have not been able to locate another contemporaneous or earlier reference to the phrase “days of the pious ones.” Nonetheless, it is clear from other references that Luzzatto sought to portray *Sefer Ḥasidim* as a product of the either biblical or rabbinic ages.

<sup>99</sup> ויגעתי ומצאתי אמרי יושר. כתוב באצבע אלהי דברי כושר.

<sup>100</sup> Exodus 31:18 and Deuteronomy 9:10. Interestingly, there is a subtle difference between the two phrases—the latter implies God’s direct authorship of the commandments, while the former equivocates, the finger in question might be God’s or someone who writes like God.

were given the honor of resting beside the intact ones in the Ark, so too should the diminished sage continue to receive the honors due to him.<sup>101</sup>

Luzzatto analogizes between this rabbinic tradition and *Sefer Ḥasidim*, because, in his words, *Sefer Ḥasidim* had been “damaged” in the course of its transmission and become full of “stammering, distorted and stiff language” (*leshonot megumgamot v’niftalot v’ik’shot*). “Errors” (*te’uyot*) such as these, however, are “insignificant compared to...the pearls of wisdom” in it.<sup>102</sup> Just as the broken tablets were holy objects, despite their physical deformity, so too are the words of *Sefer Ḥasidim*, despite their errors and interpolations.

### Canonicity and Authorship

Luzzatto further emphasized the special status of *Sefer Ḥasidim* by recommending,

Everyone who accustoms himself and his family to reading in it [i.e. his edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim*] every day one portion and thereby fulfills the lifelong obligation (*hovat ḥayyim*) [as encapsulated in the teaching], “A man must divide his years into thirds...” (BT Kiddushin 30a). From what source do we derive all that is in it [this teaching]? “Turn it and turn it, for everything is in it” (M Avot 5:22).

Luzzatto here cites the Babylonian Talmud’s teaching that a person should reserve a third of his life for studying “Scripture, Mishnah and Talmud” respectively. Luzzatto emphasizes the sanctity of *Sefer Ḥasidim* by equating it to these three venerable bodies of Torah—written and oral. Like

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<sup>101</sup> והזהרו בזקן ששכח תלמודו מחמת אונסו, דאמרינן: לוחות ושברי לוחות מונחות [כך] בארון.

<sup>102</sup> ואין להרחיק מעט הנזק אשר חלו בה ידים הבטל במיעוטו לרוב התועלת שבו בפניני אמריו....

Torah—about which the Mishnah states, “Turn it and turn it, for everything is in it”—the words of *Sefer Hasidim* possess a capacious meaning worthy of ongoing interpretation.<sup>103</sup>

As the above makes clear, in his introductions, Luzzatto sought to invest *Sefer Hasidim* with scriptural authority, or perhaps more accurately, transform it into a classic or as a canonical text. I use the term “canonical” following Moshe Halbertal, who has described Judaism as a “text-centered tradition” defined by a “shared commitment to certain texts and their role in shaping many aspects of Jewish life and endowing the tradition with coherence.”<sup>104</sup> These “certain texts,” are those that play a “normative” role (they are meant to be “obeyed and followed”); a “formative” role (they are studied consistently and form a “shared vocabulary” for students and scholars); or an “exemplary” role (they are models of virtue and social values).<sup>105</sup>

Halbertal has argued that the process of fixing the Jewish canon began in antiquity and continued through the Middle Ages, by which time it became roughly equivalent to the three bodies of knowledge commended by Talmud above: the Hebrew Bible, the Mishnah and the Babylonian Talmud. Luzzatto presented the second edition of *Sefer Hasidim* as if it were comparable to them. He stressed *Sefer Hasidim*’s normative, formative and exemplary qualities, describing its content as “the reasons for the commandments (*ta’amei hamitzvot*) or pleasant, literal scriptural interpretations (*p’shatim ne’imim*), homilies, ethical teachings, good and upright virtues, and proper conduct.”<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> See both Maimonides’ and Obadiah Mi’Bartenura’s commentaries on M Avot 5:22, for how this phrase is traditionally understood as a reference to Torah.

<sup>104</sup> Moshe Halbertal, *People of the Book: Canon, Meaning, and Authority* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997) 1.

<sup>105</sup> Halbertal, *People of the Book*, 3.

<sup>106</sup> טעמי המצוות או פשטים נעימים ודרשות ומוסרי' ומדות טובות וישרות ודרך ארץ....



If *Sefer Ḥasidim* were in fact an ancient canonical text, according to Luzzatto, however, how could R. Judah he-Ḥasid have been its author?

Indeed, like R. Abraham b. Moses ha-Cohen, Luzzatto explains Judah, “weighed and investigated and established this marvelous” book. He depicts Judah as a saint and *Sefer Ḥasidim* as embodying his life and teaching. Luzzatto also calls Judah the book’s *meḥaber*, but clarifies what he means in the second introduction:

For, our reward is with us and our actions [are] before God (Isaiah 40:10), with respect to the statements of the tales and the occurrences that are recounted from all that was expounded to us—the words themselves and their meaning (*milei da-alma u-gufei da-uvdah*)—to expound on them intelligently and with good sense. Indeed, what the mighty, pious composer (*meḥaber*) of blessed memory added are pure and refined words.<sup>107</sup>

Luzzatto describes Judah’s efforts as manipulating a text or body of texts he inherited, making emendations along the way. As the *meḥaber*, he “added” (*hosif*) “pure and refined words.” To “weigh, investigate and establish” a work like *Sefer Ḥasidim* did not mean to compose it out of whole cloth, but rather to prepare it, formalize it and edit it into a unified document. This document was thus similar to scripture and as worthy of explication and interpretation.

Luzzatto thus articulates a different concept of authorship from that familiar to us from modern literature and literary criticism. In chapter two, we noted how during the sixteenth century recognizably modern notions of “possessive authorship” emerged partly as a consequence of printers’ efforts to win credibility for their publications. R. Abraham b. Moses ha-Cohen linked *Sefer Ḥasidim* to the well-known “persona” of Judah, in order to guarantee legitimacy and religious authority for his newly printed text. Luzzatto did not divorce *Sefer Ḥasidim* from its asso-

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<sup>107</sup> והנה שכרנו אתנו ופעולתינו לפני האלהים באשר משפטי הספורים והקורות הנשמעים בה נקח עצה ומוסר על כל הנדרש אלינו ומלי דעלמא וגופי דעובדא לדרוש אליהן בשום שכל וטוב טעם. אמנם מה שהוסיף האדיר החסיד המחבר ז”ל הם אמרות טהורות וצרופות.

ciation with Judah—in fact, he reiterated it—however, he reverted to an older concept of authorship recognizable from medieval midrashic anthologies. According to David Stern, these works—such as *Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer* and *Seder Eliyahu*—can be classified as anthologies because they are both attributed to named individuals and because they are defined by specific literary features: the “manner in which sources are mined...the omission of the names of the sages, the addition of bits of old *aggadah* in new combinations and of explanations for ancient statements.”<sup>108</sup> We can understand Luzzatto’s ascription of authorship to Judah similarly—his role as *meḥaber*, was not as a “composer,” in the modern sense, but as a compiler and editor.

### **Antiquity and *Aggadah***

Luzzatto presented *Sefer Ḥasidim* not merely as a canonical text and as a religious guide, but also as a long-lost work of classical *aggadah* (non-legal, narrative literature). Luzzatto’s interest in *aggadah* can be seen as part of the larger early modern “revival of antiquity,” in Jacob Burckhardt’s famous turn of phrase. This revival is manifested in a number of areas of sixteenth-century Jewish culture.<sup>109</sup>

First, concurrent with the burning of the Talmud in Italy, Raz-Krakotzkin has identified a new interest in the texts of the Tanaitic period (c. 0 to 200 CE) among the Italian Jewish scholars of the 1550s. He has argued the Talmud burnings led Italian Jews to broaden their notion of what they considered “representative of the traditional Jewish canon” and to seek new sources of reli-

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<sup>108</sup> David Stern, *Anthology in Jewish Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004) 161-162.

<sup>109</sup> Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, trans. S. G. C. Middlemore (London: Penguin, 2004) 120-184.

gious authority that bore stamp of authentic tradition.<sup>110</sup> Five editions of the Mishnah (the preeminent text of Tanaitic Judaism) were printed during the sixteenth century and the *Zohar*, the core text of the theosophical *kabbalah*, which portrayed itself as having originated in the Tanaitic period, was printed for the first time in two editions.<sup>111</sup>

Interest in the Mishnah among early modern Jews may have been a result of the popularization of the long-standing Sephardic practice of Mishnah-study (independent of the *gemara*) following the Spanish exile and the migration of Spain's Jews to Italy.<sup>112</sup> Mordechai Breuer has identified two rationales for Mishnah study in this period. For mystics, particularly those influenced by the ideas and practices emanating from Safed and the circles of R. Joseph Karo and R. Isaac Luria, the recitation and memorization of the Mishnah became a crucial "ritual act." At the same time, in Prague, the Maharal (R. Judah Loew b. Bezalel) sought to overturn the traditional emphasis on Talmud in the *yeshiva* curriculum and stressed Mishnah-study as a necessary prerequisite to more-advanced Talmud and halakhic learning.<sup>113</sup>

Second, during the sixteenth century, throughout the Jewish world, Jewish scholars' single-minded focus on halakhic study began to wane as they, with varying intentions, began to pay more attention to *aggadah*. One reason for the revival of interest in *aggadah* was the social and

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<sup>110</sup> Ammon Raz-Krakovitzkin, "Persecution and the Art of Printing: Hebrew Books in Italy in the 1550s" in *Jewish Culture in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Honor of David B. Ruderman*, eds. Richard I. Cohen, Natalie B. Dohrmann, Adam Shear and Elchanan Reiner (Pittsburgh: Hebrew Union College Press, 2014) 97–108.

<sup>111</sup> The popularity of Mishnah study may also be linked to the influence of Sephardic tradition after the Spanish expulsion, see below.

<sup>112</sup> Mordechai Breuer, *Oholei Torah: ha-yeshivah tavnitah ve-toldoteha* (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 2003) 129–133.

<sup>113</sup> Breuer, *Oholei Torah*, 131–132. On the significance of the Mishnah for R. Joseph Karo, see R. J. Zwi Werblowsky, *Joseph Karo: Lawyer and Mystic* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1977).

psychological effect of the Spanish expulsion.<sup>114</sup> Indeed, in the Italian context, according to Robert Bonfil, “Once the immigrants from Spain became a factor in shaping the cultural atmosphere in Italy, and after the publication of the aggadic and midrashic works, followed shortly thereafter by the *Zohar*, the interest in *aggadah* and *midrash* experienced a great outburst.”<sup>115</sup> Bonfil dates this period to the 1560s and 70s, which corresponds to the period when Italian rabbis began to cite aggadic texts extensively in synagogue sermons. This period also corresponds to the flourishing of kabbalistic studies in Italy, and the concurrent decline of interest in rationalistic philosophy.<sup>116</sup> For Bonfil, the embrace of *kabbalah* and its methods—even by those scholars who did not consider themselves kabbalists—in contradistinction to philosophy, led Italian Jewish scholars (Ashkenazi, Sephardi and Italian) to mine *aggadic* texts for mystical insights, what he calls “an additional layer of meaning beyond the literal.”<sup>117</sup>

For the Spanish exile R. Jacob ibn Ḥabib, compiler of the foremost sixteenth-century aggadic compendium and commentary, *Ein Ya'akov* (1516), the experience of exile had a direct influence on his scholarly project. According to Marjorie Lehman, expulsion led ibn Ḥabib to reject philosophy as a subversive foreign influence and to seek spiritual inspiration in *aggadah*. In Lehmann’s words, while “ibn Ḥabib never explicitly states...that the *Ein Ya'akov* was a response to his generation’s historical experience...his near-exclusive attention to theology belies his ob-

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<sup>114</sup> Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998) 257.

<sup>115</sup> Bonfil, *Rabbis and Jewish Communities*, 309.

<sup>116</sup> See Moshe Idel on the spread of Spanish *kabbalah* in Italy following the expulsion and the decline of more philosophical Italian kabbalistic traditions, Moshe Idel, “Printing Kabbalah in the Sixteenth Century” in *Jewish Culture in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Honor of David B. Ruderman* (Pittsburgh: Hebrew Union College Press, 2014) 85–97.

<sup>117</sup> Bonfil, *Rabbis and Jewish Communities*, 315.

jective. He focused on faith at the precise moment when his fellow Jews were either questioning their own faith or had turned away from it entirely.” Through the study of the *aggadah*, ibn Ḥabib believed he could fashion “self-reliant, believing Jews out of the self-doubting and religiously insecure refugees.”<sup>118</sup> The fact that *Ein Ya'akov* was printed six times during the sixteenth century—in diverse locales throughout the Jewish world—testifies to the widespread interest in *aggadah*.

*Aggadah* was also a central concern in Azariah de’ Rossi’s *Me’or Einayim* (1574-1576). The second section of the second part of *Me’or Einayim* concerned the proper interpretation of this genre of rabbinic texts. According to Joanna Weinberg, de’ Rossi’s aim in this section was historiographic, that is, “to demonstrate the historical and scientific data in the Aggadot did not concur with historical or scientific truths. By eradicating the intellectually untenable elements of the Aggadot and divesting the satires and pronouncements of their literal meaning, de’ Rossi saw himself as removing the main barrier to a constructive reading of the texts. The facts were in themselves irrelevant, and in de’ Rossi’s view used as metaphors, symbols, and allegories in accordance with the principles of rhetoric.”<sup>119</sup> His conclusions were not substantially different from R. Moses Nahmanides’ famous pronouncement in his Barcelona disputation three centuries earlier, that *aggadah* had no normative value; it was simply literature.<sup>120</sup> Because “The Aggadot are

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<sup>118</sup> Lehman, *The En Yaaqov*, 118.

<sup>119</sup> Joanna Weinberg, “Translator’s Introduction” in Azariah de’ Rossi, *The Light of the Eyes*, translated by Joanna Weinberg (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001) xxvi.

<sup>120</sup> On Nahmanides’ pronouncements in the disputation and his true opinions about the status of *aggadah*, see Shalem Yahalom, “Viku’ah Barcelona u-ma’amad ha-aggadah be-mishnat ha-Ramban,” *Zion* 69, no. 1 (2004): 25–43.

definitely not traditionally transmitted *halakhah*,” they could both be studied critically and compared to non-Jewish historiography and philosophy.<sup>121</sup>

The Maharal also made the *aggadah* a focus of his scholarship. Directly attacked de’ Rossi’s characterization of *aggadah* as literature, he rejected de’ Rossi’s willingness to privilege the wisdom of non-Jewish historians and philosophers over the traditions of his own people.<sup>122</sup> While, at times, *aggadah* might appear to contradict the tenets of history or the sciences—for instance when the rabbis of the Talmud (BT Gittin 56b) suggested that a gnat had flown into Roman Emperor Titus’ ear and caused him to go mad—the Maharal argued it in fact concealed deep spiritual truths.<sup>123</sup> He made the explication of these truths a central feature of his defense of rabbinic Judaism, *Be’er Ha’Golah* (1598), and his extensive commentary on the Talmudic *aggadah*, *Hiddushei Aggadot* (not printed until the twentieth century). Even the most fanciful or seemingly preposterous aggadic statement contained esoteric wisdom.<sup>124</sup>

De’ Rossi’s dismissal and the Maharal’s defense of *aggadah* were also motivated by Christian critiques that circulated in the sixteenth century. While Christians had polemicized against *aggadah* since the thirteenth century, in the sixteenth century Catholics and Protestants—empowered by their greater familiarity with Hebrew—renewed their focus on perceived blasphemies in aggadic texts. As Kenneth Stow has shown, Catholic theologians stoked their ire

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<sup>121</sup> Weinberg, “Translator’s Introduction,” xxvi.

<sup>122</sup> Judah b. Bezalel Loew, *Be’er ha-golah* (Jerusalem: Maḥon Yerushalayim, 2000) 6:10, Bar Ilan Responsa Project.

<sup>123</sup> Guiseppe Veltri, “Maharal against Azariah de’ Rossi: The Other Side of Scepticism” in *Rabbinic Theology and Jewish Intellectual History: The Great Rabbi Loew of Prague*, ed. Meir Seidler (London: Routledge, 2013) 67, 70.

<sup>124</sup> Elbaum, Jacob. “Rabbi Judah Loew’s Attitude to the Aggadah” in *Midrash Unbound Transformations and Innovations*, eds. Joanna Weinberg and Michael Fishbane (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2013) 400. It is worth noting that Elbaum and Veltri’s analyses contradict that of Ben Zion Bokser who depicts the Maharal’s attitude as not all that much different from Maimonides, Ben Zion Bokser, *The Maharal: The Mystical Philosophy of Rabbi Judah Loew of Prague* (Northvale: Jason Aaronson, 1994), 181-182.

against Judaism, and the Talmud in particular, recalling aggadic passages they believed were “directly offensive to Christianity” in particular and “offensive to monotheistic theology in general”—such as those anthropomorphic passages that describe God praying or engaging in rabbinic disputes.<sup>125</sup> Protestant Hebraists, such as Johannes Buxtorf the Elder, similarly combed through rabbinic sources for blasphemous aggadic passages.<sup>126</sup> The Protestant scholar and Jewish convert to Christianity, Julius Conradus Otto read the *Ein Ya'akov* and prepared a resume of aggadic passages “that supposedly supported the divinity of Jesus, the doctrine of the Trinity and other Christian doctrines.”<sup>127</sup> In a time when both Catholics and Protestants were eager to accelerate the conversion of Jews to Christianity, *aggadah* was thought to be a useful weapon in the missionary arsenal. For de’ Rossi, then, one way to nullify Christian condemnations of *aggadah* as irrational or blasphemous was to deny *aggadah* normative value. In this way, it could be preserved as a source of moral teaching even though it did not possess the status of truth.

Luzzatto’s interest in *aggadah* was also considerable. He was the compiler and editor of *Kavvanot ha-Aggadot*, of course, which Froben printed simultaneously with *Sefer Ḥasidim*. Luzzatto’s stated aim in *Kavvanot ha-Aggadot* was to illuminate the true, hidden meaning of the Torah (the *sodot* or *sitrei Torah*) and the “root of faith” (*shores ha’emuna*) by explicating the *aggadot* of the Babylonian Talmud. Luzzatto argued that the sages of the Talmud had spoken in

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<sup>125</sup> Kenneth R. Stow, “The Burning of the Talmud in 1553, in Light of Sixteenth-Century Catholic Attitudes Toward the Talmud,” *Bibliothèque d’Humanisme Et Renaissance* 34, no. 3 (1972): 445-447.

<sup>126</sup> Such as Talmudic stories about Onkelos the proselyte’s conversion to Judaism (BT Gittin 56b) and the origin of the *birkat ha’minim* (the blessing against heretics, BT Berahot 28b), Joanna Weinberg, “Johann Buxtorf Makes a Notebook” in *Canonical Texts and Scholarly Practices a Global Comparative Approach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016) 283-285.

<sup>127</sup> Anthony T. Grafton and Joanna Weinberg, “I Have Always Loved the Holy Tongue:” *Isaac Casaubon, the Jews, and a Forgotten Chapter in Renaissance Scholarship* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011) 252.

“parables” and “riddles” (*meshalim* and *hidot*) and that those teachings had become too difficult for the vast majority of Jews to comprehend. In *Kavvanot ha-Aggadot*, Luzzatto sought to clarify these mysteries and make them available to students (*talmidim*) who neither fully appreciated the meaning of *aggadah* nor had access to this under-appreciated body of traditions.<sup>128</sup>

If this were not enough, Luzzatto had other aims as well. *Kavvanot ha-Aggadot* was an anthology of talmudic *aggadot* arranged tractate by tractate. At the center of nearly every page was an extract of an *aggadah*, surrounded by an essay—usually one to two pages in length—explicating the *aggadah*’s esoteric meaning. In these essays, Luzzatto cited parallels from the corpora of late-antique and medieval *midrashim* (such as *Genesis Rabbah* or the *Tanhuma*) and the homilies of medieval commentators. These essays also included Luzzatto’s own allegorical interpretations. Frequently, Luzzatto provided a postscript, excerpting a passage from the *Zohar*, or occasionally from *Sefer Hasidim*, that illustrated the essay’s theme. The fact that Luzzatto used passages from the *Zohar* and *Sefer Hasidim* in this way, alongside more conventional aggadic sources from antiquity, suggests that he viewed all of these texts as part of the same cultural cluster of traditions.

Luzzatto’s efforts in *Kavvanot ha-Aggadot*, thus, were both theological and anthological. On the one hand, the book was meant to be a new resource of Jewish spiritual wisdom. In a period when Jews were rediscovering *aggadah* as a wellspring of moral and spiritual inspiration in the aftermath of the Catholic condemnation of the Talmud, *Kavvanot ha-Aggadot* was a one volume guide that clarified the implications of these difficult talmudic texts. On the other hand, by

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<sup>128</sup> Further, Luzzatto condensed these insights and repackaged them as glosses to selected sections of tractates in the Froben Talmud edition, such as the last chapter of Tractate Sanhedrin, see Prijs, *Die basler hebräischen Drucke*, 178.



extracting and juxtaposing so many different kinds of sources, Luzzatto created an anthology of a vast body of *aggadah* in a single volume.

Luzzatto was well aware of the nature of this accomplishment, as he wrote in his introduction:

Seeing that not everyone is worthy of buying all the books which this book includes and mentions, therefore this [book] includes them all. Whereas he will lose time in bothering to seek out for himself explications and novellae in all the books, it will be easy for him to come to the place of his interest in this book, for it is a set table (*shulḥan arukh*) with every delicacy upon it and a key (*mafte'ah*) to every closed up place.<sup>129</sup> Through it, all the House of Jacob will find merit and prosper. Just as the book *Shulḥan Arukh* is founded upon all the laws in the *Beit Yosef*, so too this book is the root and essence that opens doors to all the ancient and recent homilies upon which the *Beit Ya'akov* is established and I call [its name] after it. Happy is he who came here and the teaching of all the books is in his hand.<sup>130</sup>

Luzzatto described *Kavvanot ha-Aggadot* as an aggadic analogue to the *Shulḥan Arukh* (1565-1566), R. Joseph Karo's practical guide to *halakhah*. Just as the *Shulḥan Arukh* was a distillation of Karo's compendium of *halakhah*, the *Beit Yosef* (1550–59), Luzzatto believed *Kavvanot ha-Aggadot* was a distillation of R. Jacob ibn Ḥabib and his son Levi's oft-printed anthology.<sup>131</sup> The two volumes of this work were known as *Ein Ya'akov* and *Beit Ya'akov* (1522-1523), respectively.<sup>132</sup> The fact Luzzatto and Jacob ibn Ḥabib shared the same given name was not lost

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<sup>129</sup> The term “key” here is also meant to allude to the marginal source citations throughout the work which helped readers locate the sources of his insights.

<sup>130</sup> ולהיות כי אין כל אדם זוכה לקנות כל הספרים. אשר בזה הספר נכללים ונזכרים. על כן זה יכלול את כלם. ומה שיאבד זמן להטריח לבקש אתו דרושי או חידושי בכל הספרי' בנקל יבא למקום חפצו בזה הספר כי הוא שלחן ערוך מכל המטעמים עליו. ומפתח לכל מסגר. ממנו יזונו ויפרנסו כל בית יעקב. יכשם שספר שלחן ערוך על כל הדינין שבית יו"ס נכון עליהם כן הספר הזה שורש ועיקר פותח פתחי כל הדורשים הישנים והחדשים אשר בית יעקב נכון עליהם. וקורא אני עליו אשרי מי שבא לכאן ותלמוד כל הספרים בידו:

<sup>131</sup> On the *Beit Yosef* and *Shulḥan Arukh*, see Isadore Twersky, “The Shulhan 'Aruk: Enduring Code of Jewish Law,” *Judaism* 16, no. 2 (Spring 1967): 141–58.

<sup>132</sup> On *Ein Ya'akov*, Lehman, *The En Yaaqov*. *Ein Ya'akov/Beit Ya'akov* were printed six times during the sixteenth century.

on Luzzatto, who also entitled *Kavvanot ha-Aggadot, Yashresh Ya'akov* (“Jacob will take root”), from the biblical verse, “In days to come shall Jacob take root...” (Isaiah 27:6).<sup>133</sup> Both Jacobs worked to plant the *aggadah* at the heart of Jewish study and spiritual life. The printing of *Sefer Hasidim*, along with *Kavvanot ha-Aggadot*, was another step in this direction.

## Table of Contents

A four-page table of contents follows the book’s two introductions, highlighting *Sefer Hasidim*’s aggadic content. In the second introduction, Luzzatto emphasizes this objective by drawing on Moses Maimonides and Azariah de’ Rossi:

But, within [a short] time, one who inquires in the table of contents (lit. references, *simanim*) [in this edition] will come to the source of the book itself (*makor ha-sefer azmo*).... Therefore, we chose a long and a short way to make references including laws (*dinim*) that are put forward and the tales.... **For whatever way we may extract the pearl from the sand, there is no harm and no reason for fear**, as the *Guide [of the Perplexed]* says in his introduction.<sup>134</sup>

The bolded statement above is significant. It is based on Maimonides’ “parable of the pearl,” which appears at the outset of the *Guide of the Perplexed*. There, Maimonides articulates a theory of scriptural interpretation that asserts that the words of scripture are written in code, their true meaning purposefully obscured by a deceptive artifice:

The internal meaning of the *words of the Torah* is a *pearl* whereas the external meaning of all parables *is worth nothing*, and their comparison of the concealment

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<sup>133</sup> Luzzatto, in point of fact, gave three titles to *Kavvanot ha-Aggadot*—*Kaftor Va’Ferah, Yashresh Ya’akov* and of course *Kavvanot ha-Aggadot*—all of which appeared on the title page. I’ve found editions where each of these titles is printed in larger text than the others.

<sup>134</sup> ובתוך זמן שיבקש בסימנים יוכל לבוא למקור הספר עצמו. ועוד שבתוך כך שיחפש חיפוש אחר חיפוש בתוך הספר יעברו חידושים רבים על פניו כי אין בית אשר אין שם מתחדש.... על כן בחרנו דרך ארוכה וקצרה לעשות סימנים כוללים להדינים היוצאין והמעשים: ושאר החידושים הנחננו לרוב אריכותם וכדי לקרות כלם בכל יום חלק אחד כנזכר. ובכל אופן שנוציא המרגלית מן החול אין רע ואין מחריד כמאמר המורה בהקדמתו: והקורא בו בכל יום מובטח שהו’ בן עולם הבא ויזכה לחזות בנועם ה’ לבקר בהיכלו. וכבודו אומר כלו. וכתב עליך יזרח ה’ וכבודו עליך יראה והיה ה’ לך לאור עולם אכ”ר

of the subject by its parable's external meaning to a man who let drop a pearl in his house, which was dark and full of furniture. Now this pearl is there, but he does not see it and does not know where it is. It is as though it were no longer in his possession, as it is impossible of him to derive any benefit from it until, as has been mentioned, he lights a lamp—an act to which an understanding of the meaning of the parable corresponds.<sup>135</sup>

To Luzzatto, *Sefer Hasidim* was just such a pearl lost in a dark house, that is, a sacred and profound text obscured by darkness wrought by scribal transmission.

There is, however, a subtle discrepancy between the imagery in Maimonides' parable—a pearl lost in a dark house—and Luzzatto's statement, which compares *Sefer Hasidim* to a pearl extracted from sand. In fact, Luzzatto's statement is an unattributed paraphrase of Azariah de' Rossi's *Me'or Einayim*. We have already explored the possibility that de' Rossi might have been involved in the production and censoring of the first printed edition of *Sefer Hasidim* in Bologna and his views on the *aggadah*. In *Me'or Einayim*, the pearl is a metaphor for historical information found in rabbinic *aggadot*. According to de' Rossi,

Our sages saw no reason to divert themselves from the study of the Torah to which they were completely committed and to waste part of their time in giving mental application to detailed investigation of the facts either for their own edification or for our instruction. If they did want to give us any information about these things, they were content to extract for the purposes of the moment anything valuable they could take from the dross. When they would happen to relate some aspect of these matters, they, as it were, set their sights on attaining the worthwhile purpose to which they were aspiring. Such is the way the author of the *Guide* accounts of the fifth cause [of contradictory statements] in his introduction.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Moses Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, trans. Shlomo Pines (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963) 11, emphasis original. On this parable, see Josef Stern, *Matter and Form of Maimonides' Guide* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013) 18-63. Maimonides sent mixed signals as to the value of the exoteric meaning of Scripture. His "parable of apple" indicates that the exoteric meaning of Scripture is true and of value, but not as profound as the esoteric meaning.

<sup>136</sup> Azariah de' Rossi, *The Light of the Eyes*, trans. Joanna Weinberg (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001) 386. See Weinberg's footnotes for an explication of de' Rossi's rich allusions to ancient and medieval texts. Further, it should be noted, that this passage appears within a larger apology for the sages who, in contrast to classical Greek and Roman authors, paid scant attention to history and current events.

De' Rossi thus explains that the sages of antiquity wrote about human events in *aggadot* in order to assist their students in understanding the meaning of scripture. They followed the method described by Maimonides in his *Guide*, where the teacher is “lax...using any means that occur to him or gross speculation” to make complex premises simpler for the student.<sup>137</sup> The sages similarly, de' Rossi explains, cited the events of history only to explicate the meaning of scripture and to promote its understanding among the masses, since, and here we come to the sentence in question, “In whatever way you extract the pearl from the sand, there is no harm nor reason to fear should one grope and turn it around to one’s heart’s content.”<sup>138</sup>

In quoting this statement above in his second introduction, Luzzatto drew an analogy between the words of the sages (i.e. “pearls”), necessarily obscured by the occasional reference to temporal events (“sand”), and the *aggadot* of *Sefer Ḥasidim*, whose true meaning (again, the “pearls”) is obscured by extraneous material (“sand”). A proper table of contents, Luzzatto argued, helped readers uncover the essential portions of the text—“within [a short] time, one who inquires in the table of contents [in this edition] will come to the source of the book itself”—and not be repelled by the arduous work of digging through uninspiring or irrelevant passages. It did not matter, for Luzzatto, that in following the recommendations in the table of contents, a reader might fail to digest the whole book. What was crucial for Luzzatto was that readers encounter the specific aggadic pearls in the text.

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<sup>137</sup> Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, 17-18.

<sup>138</sup> de' Rossi, *The Light of the Eyes*, 386, according to Weinberg’s translation. The Hebrew of the Mantua first edition, Azariah de’ Rossi, *Sefer me’or einayim* (Mantua, 1574):

בכל אופן שתוציא את המרגלית מן החול אין רע ואין מחיריד אם תמשמש ותהפך בו כאות נפשך.

To do this, Luzzatto structured his table entirely differently from the first printed edition's. We have already observed how that table summarized each of *Sefer Ḥasidim*'s 1178 pericopes. It was not so much a finding aid as an abridgment of the text. The entries highlighted the moral and ethical content of *Sefer Ḥasidim* and paid scant attention to its narrative elements. The table of contents in Froben's edition is, by comparison, spare. It contains only 130 entries. These are generally no more than one sentence long. They cite a curated selection of passages and make no attempt at comprehensiveness. Sometimes the table skips large groups of pericopes, other times, it cites a series one by one, and still other times, the table groups a set of consecutive pericopes by theme, as in the following selection:

That the soul in death is just as it is in life, also that the dead wear [clothes] and permission is granted to be visible to those who desire [it], and the wicked stand outside, etc. pericope (lit. reference) [§]1132

When a living person will dream of the dead, the reason is that the intellect is not dead. Further, there, all matters [relating to] death [from §1133] until [§]1139

An [halakhic] problem (*kushiya*): Why did they say a man should not fraternize with his [female] relatives [even] after, [during the time of] the Second Temple, they blinded the eyes of the evil inclination? [§]1138

That one should set the Book of Leviticus (*sefer Torat Kohanim*) from the start of a boy's education when one reads to him, there [§]1140<sup>139</sup>

There is a certain lack of precision in this table. Occasionally, as in the selection above, it reverses the order of the passages: The sequence of entries begins with §1132, then skips to §1139, then regresses to §1138, and returns to the proper order with §1140.<sup>140</sup> Similarly, sometimes the

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<sup>139</sup> שהנפש היא במיתה כמו בחיים וגם כי המתים מתלבשין ונותנין רשות להראות למי שרוצין והרשעים עומדים בחוץ כו' סימן תתשלב כשיחלום החי מן המת הטעם שהנפש המשכלת אינה מתה ושם כל ענייני המתים עד תתשלט קושיא למה אמרו לא יתחזק אדם עם קרובותיו אחרי אשר עיורו בבית שני עיני יצר הרע תתשלח שיש להשים ספר תורה כהנים למראשותיו של נער כשקוראין לו שם תתשמ

<sup>140</sup> In such cases, as in the case above, there seems to be no reasonable explanation for why the order of the entries is reversed, except for carelessness.

numbering does not correspond to that of the text. In the above, the concept that “permission is granted to be visible to those who desire [it], and the wicked stand outside” is in fact contained in the preceding pericope, §1131, and not §1132. On the other hand, frequently, the table summarizes large sections of consecutive pericopes by theme, as it does in the third entry above.

This table of contents was clearly designed to promote “consultation” or “non-linear” reading, in Ann Blair’s and Peter Stallybrass’s terms. A reader searching for passages on a particular topic—such as repentance or marriage—could easily find them by skimming the table and looking up the cited passages. Similarly, unlike the first edition, where pericope numbers appeared on the line above the first word of a pericope on the far left of the page, in this edition, Froben printed pericope numbers in large type on the same line as the enlarged first word the pericope, making it easier to locate a particular passage by number. As Luzzatto wrote in his second introduction,

We did not want to change its [the book’s] meaning (*ta’am*) and damage it with the table of contents (lit. references, *simanim*) which predecessors established (Deuteronomy 19:14). Full of errors, their faces are “thorns” and “all grown over with thistles” (Proverbs 24:31). We also saw that there was no benefit to lengthen the book with them—as they said, “One should always teach the short way,” (BT Pesahim 3a), and the converse does greater damage than benefit. For maybe they will rely on the short summaries (*kelalim kezarim*) which instruct about the root of the book (*shores ha-sefer*) and they may never come to knowledge of the root of the idea (*shores ha-inyan*).<sup>141</sup>

Luzzatto pulled no punches in his estimation of the the first printed edition’s table of contents. He compared it to “the field of the slothful...the vineyard of the man void of understanding” (Proverbs 24:30). It was so full “full of errors” that it was “all grown over with

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<sup>141</sup> לא רצינו לשנות טעמו לפוגמו בסימנים. אשר גבלו הראשונים. מלאים בטעויות כמו פניהן חרולים ועלו בהן קמשונים. וגם ראינו שאין תועלת להאריך בספר בהן ואמרו לעולם ילמד דרך קצרה ואדרבה יתר הנזק מהתועלת. כי אולי יסמכו על הסימנים שהם כללים קצרים המורים על שורש הספר ולא יבוא לעולם לידיעת שורש העניין.

thistles, the face thereof was covered with nettles” (Proverbs 24:31). Even more tellingly, Luzzatto argued that the first edition’s table obscured the true meaning of *Sefer Ḥasidim* because readers were more likely to consult its “short summaries”—trusting they accurately reflected the contents of each pericope—than text itself.

In chapter two, we recalled that R. Abraham Mintz of Padua criticized those scholars—including R. Abraham b. Moses ha-Cohen—whom he believed relied overmuch on newly printed parataxts, like tables of contents, rather than a careful and thorough reading of the texts themselves. Luzzatto, by contrast, argued that the table of contents in the second edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* was not meant to replace the text but instead facilitate its exploration and elucidate its meaning: “Within [a short] time,” Luzzatto wrote, “one who inquires in the references [in this edition] will come to the source (or better, essence or heart) of the book itself.” The table of contents in this edition was thus designed as a portal to the text, in contrast to the first edition’s table, which could easily have replaced the text altogether.<sup>142</sup>

Luzzatto’s criticism of the table of contents in the first edition also recalled that of the humanist and editor Konrad Pellikan a few decades earlier. According to Grafton, in addition to his philological and theological activities, Pellikan “became a specialist in making indexes” and despite this, “Like other indexers before and after, he enjoyed ridiculing his readers for taking advantage of the shortcut provided.”<sup>143</sup> Finding aids in early modern printed works were thus perceived as a double-edged sword: They could facilitate engagement with text by directing

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<sup>142</sup> It is difficult to determine with certainty who authored the table. The statements in Luzzatto’s second introduction indicate that he was keenly interested in it and therefore may have written it, but it is similar to many of the other tables in Froben’s publications and could easily have been composed by Zifroni.

<sup>143</sup> Grafton, *The Culture of Correction in Renaissance Europe*, 16.

readers more quickly to specific passages—and for this reason were especially desirable and worthy of extolling on title pages and in introductions—but they also deterred some readers from reading the full text.

Moreover, as Stallybrass has shown, reference aids often served particular political or religious agendas. In early modern printed Bibles, they directed readers to verses that affirmed the theological positions of the editor or printer. For good or for ill, therefore, reference aids functioned as interpretive matrices, often determining the parts of a text readers consulted and how they understood the meaning of text as a whole.<sup>144</sup> This was certainly the case in the table of contents in Froben's edition, which highlighted narrative vignettes and theological teachings, as well as the realia contained in *Sefer Ḥasidim*. The overall impression the table conveys is that readers should appreciate *Sefer Ḥasidim* as narrative literature and esoteric wisdom.

Luzzatto's table of contents begins with the heading, "These are the references (*simanim*) comprising what is in *Sefer Ḥasidim*, namely on all the legal rulings and tales (*ha'dinim v'ha'-ma'asim*) which are found in it, and the individual novellae (*hidushim*) that are included and concealed (*mu'vlatim*) in them."<sup>145</sup> Thus, the focus of the table, stated at the outset, is practical normative principles and tales, as well as novel ideas and interpretations. The table's goal is to identify these innovations, which *Sefer Ḥasidim* sometimes conceals or disguises. The table is, therefore, explicitly selective.

In point of fact, however, the term "legal rulings" (*dinim*) appears in no more than ten of the entries in the table of contents, for example,

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<sup>144</sup> Peter Stallybrass, "Books and Scrolls: Navigating the Bible" in *Books and Readers in Early Modern England*. Edited by Jennifer Andersen and Elizabeth Sauer (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002) 43–79.

<sup>145</sup> אלו הן הסימנים כוללים שבספר חסידים היינו על כל הדינים והמעשים [כך] אשר נמצא בו והחדושים הפרטיים נכללים ומובלעים בהן:



Rulings regarding oaths, vows, strictures and fasts, and the interpretive distinction (*hiluk*) in the verse “I have sworn firmly...” (Psalms 119:106), and regarding handshaking from pericope (lit. reference, *siman*) 1091 until 1113<sup>146</sup>

A larger number of the entries might be described as falling somewhere between practical advice and religious norms connected with the synagogue, domestic life and piety, for example,

It is better to betroth a rich woman, also if she is not an appropriate [match] [§]381<sup>147</sup>

Or,

To check himself prior to going to synagogue and washing his hands, and the tale of a man who had [impure] fat (*helev*) under his nail, etc. [§]48<sup>148</sup>

The distinctive feature of this table of contents, however, is its frequent references to “tales” (*ma’asim*, sing. *ma’aseh*). Indeed, over a third of the entries use the term *ma’aseh* explicitly and highlight the presence of *ma’asim* in the pericopes. While I have chosen to translate this term as “tale,” the word’s meaning is not self-evident. It is a noun derived from the Hebrew verb “to do” or “to make.” As such, it may be accurately translated as an “action,” “event” or “incident.”<sup>149</sup> In Tannaitic texts, a *ma’aseh* was “incident” or “story,” often about a sage, from which

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<sup>146</sup> דיני שבועות ונדרים וחרמות ותעניות וחילוק בפסוק נשבעתי ואקיימה וכו' ותקיעת כף מסימן תתצא עד תתשיג

<sup>147</sup> יותר טוב לישא אשה עשירה גם אם אינה הגונה שפא  
On ambivalence about women and marriage, and its social and economic implications, among the *Hasidei Ashkenaz*, see Judith R. Baskin, “From Separation to Displacement: the Problem of Women in ‘Sefer Ḥasidim,’” *AJS Review* 19, no. 1 (1994): 12.

<sup>148</sup> לבדוק את עצמו קודם שילך לב"ה ורחיצת ידיו ומעשה באחד שהיה חלב תחת הצפורן וכו' כח  
The purity of the synagogue was of particular concern to medieval Ashkenazi Jews and to the *Hasidei Ashkenaz*, see Elisheva Baumgarten, *Practicing Piety in Medieval Ashkenaz: Men, Women, and Everyday Religious Observance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014) 21-50. On impure fats, see also §270.

<sup>149</sup> *Milon Even Shoshan* [Hebrew], s.v. “מעשה;” Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim...*, s.v. “מעשה.”

an halakhic principle was derived. The word *ma'aseh* was also a keyword that preceded such stories in this literature.<sup>150</sup>

By the medieval period, however, as Lucia Raspe and Erika Timm have shown, *ma'aseh* began to take on a more general meaning, simply that of a “tale” with no associated halakhic content.<sup>151</sup> In the sixteenth century, *ma'asim* (also, *ma'asiyot*) and the Yiddish cognate *mayses* (sing. *mayse*) came to denote a new genre of popular literature, as well as printed anthologies of tales in Hebrew and in the vernacular, such as the *Ki-Bukh* and *Maysebukh*.<sup>152</sup> These titles were meant first and foremost to entertain readers, and often featured vivid depictions of daily life, as well as hagiographies of the sages. Indeed, in his *Kavvanot ha-Aggadot*, Luzzatto also anthologized a number of *ma'asim* (including some that were subsequently included in the *Maysebukh*.<sup>153</sup>) It is therefore not surprising that the table of contents to Froben's *Sefer Ḥasidim* highlighted this popular genre of literature and directed readers to them.

Moreover, the table often emphasized *ma'asim* at the expense of the legal, ethical and theological content in *Sefer Ḥasidim* pericopes. For example, the fifth entry in the table of contents reads,

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<sup>150</sup> Rikva Shemesh, “On the Narrative Discourse in Tannaitic Language: an Exploration of the מעשה (Ma'aseh) and פעם אחת (Pa'Am Ahat) Discourse Units,” *Hebrew Studies* 49 (2008): 99–123; *Encyclopedia Judaica*, s.v. “Ma'aseh.”

<sup>151</sup> Lucia Raspe, *Jüdische Hagiographie im Mittelalterlichen Aschkenas* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006) 47–50. See also, Eli Yassif, *The Hebrew Folktale: History, Genre, Meaning*, trans. Jacqueline S. Teitelbaum (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2009) 132, 492 n. 64; Erika Timm, “Zur Frühgeschichte der Yiddischen Erzählprosa: Eine Neuaufgefundene Maise-Handschrift,” *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 117 (1995) 243–80; Dan Ben-Amos, “Generic Distinctions in the Aggadah” in *Studies in Jewish Folklore*, ed. Frank Talmage (Cambridge: Association for Judaic Studies, 1980) 62.

<sup>152</sup> There is debate about when each of these titles were printed for the first time, though both occurred during the sixteenth century, see Israel Zinberg, *A History of Jewish Literature*, vol. 8, trans. Bernard Martin (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1974) 186.

<sup>153</sup> Max Grünbaum, *Jüdischdeutsche Chrestomathie: Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Kunde der Hebräischen Literatur* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1882) 450.

A tale (*ma'aseh*) of a woman who came to the house of study of Rabbi Meir and said, "One of you betrothed me through sexual relations," etc. 22<sup>154</sup>

In fact, the pericope summarized in the entry above, §22, contains a much more complex discussion of the responsibilities of someone suspected of committing a sin:

- a. One who sinned in one matter, and others are suspected, must say, "I am he, for I sinned," in order that everyone will not sin on his account by suspecting those who are innocent (*keshirim*).
- b. If he is in the company of other people and a thing is done that is not proper, and it was not known who the sinner is, it is necessary that he should say, "I am he, for I sinned," even if he did not sin. And through me the sinner will confess and not be humiliated, like what happened (*ma'aseh*) with Rabbi Meir:
- c. There is a tale (*ma'aseh*) about a certain woman who came to the house of study of Rabbi Meir. She said to them, "One of you betrothed yourself to me through sexual intercourse!" Rabbi Meir stood up and wrote a bill of divorce and gave it to her.
- d. Even one who confesses for others can say, "we sinned" and dirty himself with them, since "all Israel is bound to one another" (Sifre to Numbers, Beḥukotai 7:5).
- e. If he saw people sinning and did not protest, he must confess even though he [himself] did not sin. When he confesses, he should remember all his sins as they are. If he does not repent on account of some of his sins, he should say, "You are our Creator and You know our urges. Overpower the urge of our hearts and circumcise our foreskins, that our necks will no longer be stiff."<sup>155</sup>

Only one section of §22 contains a *ma'aseh*, section (c). The preceding and succeeding sections enumerate practical guidelines for how a pious person ought to comport himself after committing a sin or in the presence of someone who commits a sin. The first edition's table of contents, in

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<sup>154</sup> מעשה באשה א' באה לבית מדרשו של ר"מ ואמרה אחד מכם קדשני בביאה כו'

<sup>155</sup> מי שחטא בדבר אחד ואחרים נחשדים צריך לומר אני הוא שחטאתי כדי שלא יחטאו העולם על ידו שיהיו חושדים בכשרים. ואם הוא בחבורת בני אדם ונעשה דבר אחד שלא כהוגן ולא נודע מי החוטא צריך שיאמר אני הוא שחטאתי אף על פי שלא חטא ועל ידי שיתודה החוטא לא יבוש כמעשה דרבי מאיר: מעשה באשה אחת שבאת [כך] לבית מדרשו של ר' מאיר אמרה להם אחד מכם קדשני בביאה עמד ר' מאיר וכתב גט כריתות ונתן לה ואף המתודה על אחרים יכול לומר חטאנו ולכלול עצמו עמהם לפי שכל ישראל ערבים זה לזה. ואם ראה בני אדם חוטאים ולא מיחה בידם צריך להתודאות אף על פי שהוא לא חטא וכשהו' מתודה יזכור כל עונותיו כהוייתן ואם אינו שב ממקצת עונותיו יאמר אתה יוצרינו ואתה יודע יצרנו. ואתה תכניע יצר לבבנו ומול את ערלתנו שלא נקשה עוד ערפנו.

This passage is based on BT Sanhedrin 11a.

fact, has a much more accurate summary of this pericope: “He who sinned in one matter and the masses are suspicious must say, ‘I am he,’ in order that the innocent will not be suspected.”<sup>156</sup> The second edition’s table of contents thus takes a greater interest in identifying the narrative components of the text, rather than its ethical instructions.

Unlike the first edition of *Sefer Hasidim*, Froben’s edition was printed during a period of renewed Christian interest in Hebrew learning. It seems likely that the table of contents in the second edition highlighted passages that would have been of interest to these readers, including those tales that contained esoteric or magical knowledge or testimony about Jewish and Christian interactions.

Indeed, nearly a quarter of the entries in the table refer to the afterlife, angels or demons. Even given its laconic style, the table gives especially detailed descriptions of these pericopes, such as “The tale of a foreign woman (*nokhrit*) who died and returned and said that she saw in that world a Jewess whose hand was defiled with the fat with which she made a fire too close to [the start Sabbath] eve.”<sup>157</sup> Or, “On Hoshana Rabba eve, the souls go out from their graves to pray and there [also] matters [relating to] the dead and martyrs (*ha-metim al kiddush ha-shem*).”<sup>158</sup> It is possible to explain the prominence of this material as a reflection of the content of *Sefer Hasidim* itself—the book does indeed contain much speculative and magical material. However, these themes only account for a portion of the overall content, reading the table of contents one would not be faulted for thinking that this was *Sefer Hasidim*’s primary preoccupation.

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<sup>156</sup> מי שחטא בדבר אחד ורבי' נחדישים חייב לומר אני הוא כדי שלא יחשדו כשרים.

<sup>157</sup> מעשה בנכרית אחת שמתה וחזרה ואמרה כי ראתה באותו עולם יהודית א' בית יד שלה מטונף בחלב לפי שהדליקה סמוך לחשיכה ס' ער [כך]

<sup>158</sup> בליל הושענא רבא [כך] יוצאות הנפשות מן הקברות להתפלל ושם ענייני המתים והמתים על קידוש השם מסימן תמה עד תנו

Second, the table of contents also highlights passages that concern relationships of Jews to non-Jews and Jewish converts to Christianity. It, for example, calls attention to such notable pericopes as the one discussed in chapter two, §188, “The tale of one whose son converted (*hemir*) and his father and his mother wanted to give him money to cause him to return to their house....”<sup>159</sup> As well as §859, “The tale that happened to a certain apostate (*mumar*), when there was a fire on the Sabbath, [who] said, ‘Give me your book and I will rescue them [sic] from the fire....’”<sup>160</sup>

Unlike the first printed edition, this second edition of *Sefer Hasidim* was produced in a Christian-owned shop, in a city where the settlement of Jews was strongly curtailed. Froben’s printing house was emblematic of the heterogeneous world of late-sixteenth-century printing, where Jews and Christians (along with Jewish converts to Christianity) labored side-by-side to produce new editions of Hebrew texts.<sup>161</sup> In such a context, it is not surprising that Froben and his team would give the narrative passages describing Jewish-Christian interactions a prominent place in their table of contents. These tales represented the realia of daily life at the time of its composition and remained relevant as Jews continued to live among Christians.

Moreover, early modern Christians Hebraists maintained an abiding interest in Jewish attitudes toward Christians and Christianity. Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia has famously identified over sixty books from this period describing Jewish practices and ceremonies, which he dubbed, early

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<sup>159</sup> מעשה באחד שהמיר בנו ואביו ואמו רצו ליתן ממון להחזירו לביתם....

<sup>160</sup> מעשה היה במומר אחד כשהיתה דלקה בשבת אמר ליהודי תן לי ספרך ואצילם מן הדלקה....

<sup>161</sup> Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early-Modern Europe*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 56; Stephen G. Burnett, *From Christian Hebraism to Jewish Studies: Johannes Buxtorf (1564-1629) and Hebrew Learning in the Seventeenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 48-53; Raz-Krakovitzkin, *The Censor, the Editor, and the Text*, 25; Anthony Grafton, *The Culture of Correction in Renaissance Europe* (London: British Library, 2011), 78-142.

modern “ethnographies of the Jews.”<sup>162</sup> Yaacov Deutsch has noted that these works frequently sought to depict the “anti-Christian nature of Jewish ceremonies and rituals” and betrayed “a generally negative, if not actively hostile, attitude toward Judaism.”<sup>163</sup> Johannes Buxtorf avidly recorded extracts from Hebrew texts and his own observations of Jewish daily life in his notebook as part of a larger scholarly endeavor to demonstrate the contemptibility Judaism and superiority of Christianity.<sup>164</sup> The references to passages containing magic or those containing stories of Christian and Jewish interactions—even those that did not depict Christians and Christianity in a positive light—are entirely in character with the larger Hebraist ethnographic interest in Judaism. Such passages called attention to those Jewish concepts and practices that most validated Christians’ polemical preconception of Jews and Judaism was “superstitious” and “anti-Christian.”<sup>165</sup>

Emphasis on esoteric and ethnographic passages in *Sefer Hasidim* is a clue that the table of contents may have been composed with Christian readers in mind. We know that the edition found its way into Hebraists’ hands, among them, Isaac Casaubon, whom Joanna Weinberg and Anthony Grafton have shown owned a copy of Froben’s edition and took an interest in its *ma’asim*. Casaubon even commended the book to his fellow humanist Joseph Scaliger, who was

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<sup>162</sup> Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia, “Christian Ethnography of Jews in Early Modern Germany” in *The Expulsion of the Jews and After*, ed. Raymond Waddington (New York: Garland, 1994) 223-235.

<sup>163</sup> Yaacov Deutsch, “Polemical Ethnographies: Descriptions of Yom Kippur in the Writings of Christian Hebraists and Jewish Converts in Early Modern Europe” in *Hebraica Veritas?: Christian Hebraists and the Study of Judaism in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Allison P. Coudert and Jeffrey S. Shoulson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004) 204; Yaacov Deutsch, *Judaism in Christian Eyes: Ethnographic Descriptions of Jews and Judaism in Early Modern Europe*, trans. Avi Aronsky (New York: Oxford, 2012).

<sup>164</sup> Weinberg, “Johann Buxtorf Makes a Notebook,” 293.

<sup>165</sup> Deutsch, “Polemical Ethnographies,” 224.

not favorably impressed.<sup>166</sup> Nonetheless, the table of contents is an example of how the concerns and interests of Christian readers likely shaped the paratexts Christian Hebrew printers produced at the end of the sixteenth century and as such, their publications differed from those produced by Jews earlier in the century, such as the partners of Bologna.

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<sup>166</sup> Grafton and Weinberg, *"I Have Always Loved the Holy Tongue,"* 55-59.

## Chapter 5

### The Text of the Second Printed Edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim*

This chapter is a study of the text of *Sefer Ḥasidim* in Froben's second printed edition. It was based on that of the first edition departing from it in three primary domains: (1) The application of more aggressive forms of censorship—such as “anachronizing” words that might be perceived as anti-Christian; (2) the elimination of Judeo-German and Judeo-French phrases in order to present *Sefer Ḥasidim* as a canonical work of Hebrew *aggadah*; (3) the introduction of punctuation and explanatory glosses to make the text's meaning more accessible to students. Taken together, these modifications show that in the process of printing *Sefer Ḥasidim* once more, the text was adapted to suit the social, political and religious context of the late-sixteenth century.

#### Dependence on the *Editio Princeps*

The partners of Bologna's first edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* served as the exemplar for Froben's second edition. Deviations are the exception, not the rule; where they exist, they are indicative of Froben's editors' interventions. Indeed, despite the fact that the first edition was printed in a semi-cursive typeface, and the second edition was printed in a square typeface, the same pericopes are frequently found together on the same page in both editions and the same words frequently appear on the same lines.<sup>1</sup>

Further, Froben and his team carried into their edition the modifications the partners introduced, forty years later. For example, §188, which describes the attempts of Jewish parents to

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<sup>1</sup> On the implications of this choice of typeface, see below.



bribe their apostate son to return to the fold, is identical in both the first and second editions. Froben's editors also transferred the partners' replacements for perceived anti-Christian words and expressions—such as “apostatized” (*nishtammad*) and *goyim* with “converted from the law” (*hemir et ha-dat*) and “foreigners” (*nokhri'im*), respectively—to their edition.<sup>2</sup> The same can be said for other censored passages in the first edition and their parallels in the second—Froben's editors carried over those modifications introduced by the partners. While it is theoretically possible that both the first and second editions were derived from the same (censored) exemplar, no such a text has come down to us. None of the manuscripts of *Sefer Ḥasidim* available is as similar to the second printed edition as the first.

A final indication of the use of the first printed edition as a basis for the second is Luzzatto's incorporation the first and last paragraphs of the R. Abraham b. Moses ha-Cohen's introduction into his second introduction, as its second and last paragraphs—without attribution. These borrowings confirm that the supposition of bibliographers is warranted, that the second edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* relied on the first as its exemplar.<sup>3</sup>

### **Editing, Correcting and Censoring**

While Luzzatto composed the introductions that preceded the text of *Sefer Ḥasidim* in Froben's edition, Zifroni was likely responsible for preparing the accompanying text. When Zifroni, in the colophon to *Kavvanot ha-Aggadot* discussed above, apologized for the errors that proliferated because his Christian colleagues' negligence, he hinted at his role in Froben's print

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<sup>2</sup> See chapter two for a fuller discussion of this pericope.

<sup>3</sup> Marvin J. Heller, *The Sixteenth Century Hebrew Book: An Abridged Thesaurus* (Leiden: Brill, 2004) 697.

shop—that of preparer and inspector of texts. Elisheva Carlebach has shown how Zifroni was actively involved in preparing the texts of broadside calendars he printed in Venice during the late-1590s and early-1600s.<sup>4</sup> Anthony Grafton has depicted the sixteenth-century “corrector” as engaged in “multiple practices” from textual criticism to censorship to public relations to the labor of printing itself.<sup>5</sup> And Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin has argued that censorship of Hebrew texts was one step in a larger editorial process.<sup>6</sup> This is exactly how Luzzatto understood the tasks involved in preparing *Sefer Hasidim*, as he stated in his first introduction: The second edition of *Sefer Hasidim* had been “expurgated, refined, corrected and approved” (*mezukkak, mezuraf, mugah u-me’ushar*), implying that all these tasks were closely related and likely occurred in quick succession. Moreover, Froben’s edition of *Sefer Hasidim* included neither a censor’s mark nor any other indication that an official censor was involved in its production. It is likely that the censoring of the text was part and parcel of a process overseen by Zifroni that also included the removal of non-Hebrew words and phrases, as well as the addition of explanatory glosses.

### Censorship

Ruth Langer has described two methods of censoring Jewish liturgies in early modern printed liturgies: One approach favored changes that would “merely remove the elements objectionable to Christians” but did “not effectively change the inner-Jewish meaning of the text.” A

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<sup>4</sup> Elisheva Carlebach, “Precious Time: Jewish Wall Calendars in the Valmadonna Collection” in *The Writing on the Wall a Catalogue of Judaica Broadsides From the Valmadonna Trust Library* (London: The Valmadonna Trust Library, 2015) 23-27.

<sup>5</sup> Anthony Grafton, *The Culture of Correction in Renaissance Europe* (London: British Library, 2011) 142.

<sup>6</sup> Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, *The Censor, the Editor, and the Text: The Catholic Church and the Shaping of the Jewish Canon in the Sixteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007) 112-114. For an assessment of this theory, see below.

second approach was more aggressive, seeking “fundamentally to transform the intent of” the text.<sup>7</sup> In chapter two, I argued that the partners engaged in both forms of censorship in their edition of *Sefer Hasidim*. Sometimes they replaced pejorative names with neutral descriptors without changing the semantic content of a passage. Other times, their replacements were more aggressive and introduced uncertainty as to a passage’s meaning. On the whole, however, these interventions involved replacing individual words or occasionally phrases with alternatives. The partners did not alter whole sentences and they did not delete words or phrases.

The editors of the second edition of *Sefer Hasidim* were frequently more aggressive. Their efforts can be summarized as follows: (1) In some passages, they replaced problematic words or phrases with less-objectionable variants, for instance, *goy* with *nokhri*—just as we saw in the first edition. (2) In other passages, they “anachronized” problematic words or phrases, replacing problematic terms with others that applied to groups from antiquity, such as the Sadducees or pagans—groups that no longer existed in their own day. (3) They “universalized” some passages, transforming statements that applied exclusively to Christians into statements that applied to all people. And, (4) in some cases, they eliminated problematic words, phrases and sentences altogether.

As we saw in the first edition, the partners’ efforts to remove objectionable content—like most censorship in the sixteenth century—were haphazard. Froben’s second edition was a further winnowing of the many suspect elements that remained in the partners’ edition.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, it is

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<sup>7</sup> See chapter 2 and Ruth Langer, *Cursing the Christians?: A History of the Birkat HaMinim* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) 115.

<sup>8</sup> It should be noted, however, that even Froben’s editors’ attempts were imperfect. A number of passages remained with included offensive words, even the word *goy*. See below.

clear the editors of the Froben edition believed words the partners understood to be neutral and inoffensive, could be perceived as problematic. Take, for example, §221, which describes strategies medieval Jews used to avoid persecution at the hands of crusading armies.<sup>9</sup> Here it is in the partners' edition:

- a. "Among the nations, (*u-va-goyim*) they shall not be reckoned..." (Numbers 23:9).<sup>10</sup> "All who see shall recognize that they are a stock the Lord has blessed" (Isaiah 61:9). How so?
- b. Since Israel shall not say, if soldiers come to them, that they will not make a sign of foreign deity (*a-z*, the acronym for *avodah zarah*) on their clothes and since they shall not make themselves like those who are priests (*komerim*). They shall not place on their homes a sign of foreign deity (*a-z*) and they shall not shave the top of the head like priests or shaved-heads (*komerim ve-galahim*), so that the foreigners (*nokhri'im*) might think that they are foreigners.
- c. If the foreigners pass by and chance upon them, the Jews, and the foreigners go into a house of a foreign deity (*beit avodah zarah*), they, the Jews, shall not go with them, that they might think that they are foreigners, as it says, "If we forgot the name of our God and spread forth our hands to a foreign god, God would surely search it out" (Psalms 44:21-22), and it's written, "Then Jehu and Jehonadav son of Rehab came into the temple of Baal, and they said to the worshipers of Baal, 'Search and make sure that there are no worshipers of the Lord among you, but only worshipers of

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<sup>9</sup> Joseph Hacker in "Al gezerat tat"nu (1096)," *Zion* 31, no. 1 (1966): 225–31 discusses parallels to this pericope from the Parma MS. The concept of disguising oneself to avoid persecution also appears in the Babylonian Talmud, such as the case of Rabbi Meir in BT Avodah Zarah 18a. The literature on the persecution Jews during the medieval period and the Crusades, which this passage alludes to, is vast, a sampling includes: A. Neubauer and M. Stern, *Hebräische Berichte über die Judenverfolgungen während der Kreuzzüge* (Berlin: Simion, 1892); Shlomo Eidelberg, *The Jews and the Crusaders: The Hebrew Chronicles of the First and Second Crusades* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977); Ivan Marcus, "From Politics to Martyrdom: Shifting Paradigms in the Hebrew Narratives of the 1096 Crusade Riots," *Prooftexts* 2 (1982): 40-52; Robert Chazan, *European Jewry and the First Crusade* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Susan Einbinder, *Beautiful Death: Jewish Poetry and Martyrdom in Medieval France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

<sup>10</sup> I deviate from the NJPS translation here to make the syntax accord better with the Hebrew original and also link the two verses.

Baal” (2 Kings 10:23) for they were fearful lest there were with them worshipers of the Lord out of fear of the king.<sup>11</sup>

Froben’s editors modified this pericope in the following ways: they replaced (1) the acronym for “foreign deity” (*avodah zarah*) with the acronym for “idol worship” (*avodat elilim*); (2) “priests” (*komerim*) with “servants of idol worship” (*meshartei avodat elilim*); and (3) “house of a foreign deity” (*beit avodah zarah*) with “house of their prayer” (*beit tefillatam*). Additionally, the editors eliminated the phrase “priests or shaved-heads” (*komerim ve-galahim*).<sup>12</sup>

Before exploring the impact of these modifications on the meaning of this passage, it is important to note one word that neither the partners nor the editors of the Froben edition changed: The passage begins with a biblical quotation whose first word is none other than the infamous *goyim*. As discussed earlier, while in the Bible *goyim* was used generically to refer to the “nations of the world,” here, *Sefer Hasidim* took the quotation out of context and, anachronistically, interpreted it as a reference to non-Jews with whom Jews should not be confused. Thus, at first glance, it is surprising, given the reputation this term had acquired among Christians that neither the partners’ nor Froben’s editors eliminated or replaced it with a neutral alternative. However, we might surmise that both groups did not make this choice because they either did not

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<sup>11</sup> This is the text of this pericope in the partners’ edition, words and phrases subsequently adapted in the Froben edition are bolded:

ובגוים לא יתחשב כל רואיהם יכירום כי הם זרע ברך ה' כיצ' שלא יאמרו ישראל אם באים חיילות עליהם שלא יעשו על בגדיהם סימן **מע"ז** ושלא יעשו עצמם כאלו הם **ככומרים** שלא ישימו על בתיהם סימן **מע"ז** ושלא יגחלו בגוב' הראש **ככומרים וגלחים** שיהיו הנכרי' סבורים שהם נכרי' ואם נכרים עוברי' ופוגעי' בהן יהודים והנכרים הולכים בבית **עבודה זרה** לא ילכו עמהם היהודים שיהיו סבורים שהם נכרים שנאמר אם שכחנו שם אלהינו ונפרוש כפינו לאל זר הלא אלהים יחקור זאת וכתוב ויבא יהוא ויהונדב בן רכב בית הבעל ויאמרו לעבדי הבעל חפשו וראו אם יש פה עמכם מעבדי ה' כי הוא לעבדי הבעל לבדם כי היו יראים פן יהיה מעבדי ה' עמהם מיראת המלך.

<sup>12</sup> This is the text of this pericope in Froben’s edition, with changes from the first edition in bold:

ובגוים לא יתחשב כל רואיהם יכירום כי הם זרע ברך ה' כיצ' שלא יאמרו ישראל אם באים חיילות עליהם שלא יעשו על בגדיהם סימן **מע"א** ושלא יעשו עצמם כאלו הם **משרתי ע"א** שלא ישימו על בתיהם סימן **מע"א** ושלא יגחלו בגוב' הראש שיהיו הנכרי' סבורים שהם נכרי' ואם נכרים עוברים ופוגעים בהן יהודים והנכרים הולכים בבית **תפילתם** לא ילכו עמהם היהודי' שיהיו סבורים שהם נכרים שנאמר אם שכחנו שם אלהינו ונפרוש כפינו לאל זר הלא אלהים יחקור זאת וכתוב ויבא יהוא ויהונדב בן רכב בית הבעל ויאמרו לעבדי הבעל חפשו וראו אם יש פה עמכם מעבדי ה' כי הוא לעבדי הבעל לבדם כי היו יראים פן יהיה מעבדי ה' עמהם מיראת המלך:

wish or did not perceive a need to alter a quotation from Bible, even if it contained a name that acquired an offensive meaning in their own day.<sup>13</sup>

The same cannot be said for the expression *avodah zarah* (translated here as “foreign deity”). As discussed in chapter two, the partners were apparently untroubled by this expression and there are instances of it throughout their edition. While in antiquity, *avodah zarah* referred to pagan ritual practices, by the Middle Ages it came to apply to Christianity and Christians as well.<sup>14</sup> By the late-sixteenth century, Christian censors sought to remove all mention of it from Jewish books. Thus, the first principle of expurgation in Domenico Gerosolimitano’s *Sefer ha-Zikkuk* of 1596 was, “Any instance of *avodah zarah* (lit. the acronym *ayin-zayin*), which is not meant explicitly as idol worship—namely the *avodah zarah* that existed prior to Christianity—one should write in its place the acronym *ayin-kaf-vav-mem* [pronounced *akum*] meaning, ‘worshippers of the stars and constellations.’”<sup>15</sup>

According to Federica Francesconi, Domenico understood *avodah zarah* as an expression of “the idea that Jews claimed superiority over Christianity:” Jews practiced the true religion; Christians practiced little more than pagan idolatry.<sup>16</sup> Interpretations like these led Froben to eliminate the entire tractate entitled *Avodah Zarah* from his Babylonian Talmud. Similarly, in his edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim*, his editors eliminated the phrase *avodah zarah* completely and replaced

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<sup>13</sup> Domenico, in his handbook, did not recommend any changes to this passage either, Gila Prebor, “‘Sefer ha-Zikkuk’ shel Dominico Yerushalmi,” *Italia* 18 (2008): 84.

<sup>14</sup> Moshe Halbertal and Avishai Margalit, *Idolatry*, trans. Naomi Goldblum (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992) 3-4, 202-213.

<sup>15</sup> My translation from Prebor’s transcription of MS Vatican 273, Prebor, “Sefer ha-Zikkuk,” 53. See also, Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, *The Censor, the Editor, and the Text*, 121.

<sup>16</sup> Federica Francesconi, “‘This Passage Can Also Be Read Differently ... :’ How Jews and Christians Censored Hebrew Texts in Early Modern Modena,” *Jewish History* 26, no. 1 (June 12, 2012): 149.

it with an alternative that referred unmistakably to pagan idol worship. This task was made easier because the partners, in their edition, frequently used the Hebrew acronym *ayin-zayin* in place of the full expression, *avodah zarah*. To transform this acronym into an explicit reference to idolators, the editors simply had to replace the Hebrew character *zayin* with an *aleph*, rendering the acronym for the Hebrew expression, *avodat elilim* (“idol worship.”)

By making this modification in this pericope, Froben’s editors no longer needed to replace another Hebrew term, “foreigner” (*nokhri*) found throughout their exemplar. By the medieval period, Christians perceived this term as a synonym for *goy*, with all its negative associations.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, Domenico equated *goy* and *nokhri* when he wrote, the “names *goy*, *goyim*, *nokhri*, *nokhrit*, if understood as implying any disgrace, slander and insult to that very *goy*, should be erased, and in its place [written] *akum*.”<sup>18</sup> In many instances, Froben’s editors indeed replaced *nokhri* with other terms—a decision that indicated their sensitivity to negative perceptions of the term and their willingness to “second-guess” the first edition. However, here, Froben’s editors avoided having to make a replacement, by transforming the term *avodah zarah*, which could be a reference to Christianity, into *avodat elilim*, which was without exception a reference to paganism. By doing so, the editors made clear that the “foreigners” described above were pagans. They traded on the essential ambiguity of the term and assumed context would prevent Christian readers from taking offense.

Also in the pericope above, Froben’s editors replaced the word *komerim* (“priests”) with *m’shartei avodat elilim* (“servants of idol worship”). In the Bible, the term *komerim* was regular-

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<sup>17</sup> Ishay Rosen-Zvi and Adi Ophir, “Goy: Toward a Genealogy,” *Diné Israel* 28 (2011): 69.

<sup>18</sup> My translation according to Prebor’s transcription, Prebor, “Sefer ha-Zikkuk,” 53. See also, Raz-Krakotzkin, *The Censor; the Editor and the Text*, 121.

ly used to refer to practitioners of idolatrous cults (2 Kings 23; Hosea 10:25) in contrast to the *kohanim* (also “priests”) who served the Lord.<sup>19</sup> By the Middle Ages, this term, like *avodah zarah*, came to refer to Christian religious figures—an equivalence underscored in the passage above by the *komer*’s being linked to *galaḥim*, a disparaging name for tonsured Christian monks.<sup>20</sup> Once again, Froben’s editors replaced a troubling term with an alternative that directed the focus of the passage away from Christians toward pagan gentiles.

The third modification was somewhat more subtle and sophisticated. In section (c), the first edition’s text discourages Jews from entering a church to avoid persecution because they might be mistaken for Christians. There, the church is called a *beit avodah zarah* (“house of a foreign deity” or “house of idolatry”). Froben’s editors, however, chose to replace this expression with *beit tefillatam* (“house of their prayer”). Rather than replacing a word that could be taken as a reference to Christianity with a word whose definition was restricted to paganism, instead, they subtly humanized the antagonists in the story. They were no longer servants of an alien cult; rather, they were people who offer *tefillot*, prayers—like Jews. At the same time, the aural similarity of the words *tefillah* (prayer) and *tiflah* (frivolity) perhaps allowed Jewish readers to preserve, subtly, a vestige of passage’s old polemical reading.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Margaret Barker, *The Mother of the Lord: Volume 1: The Lady in the Temple* (London: T & T Clark, 2012) 40.

<sup>20</sup> See chapter two, for a fuller discussion of this term.

<sup>21</sup> I am grateful to Elisheva Carlebach for this insight.



Another pericope, §697 (in Froben's edition, §698 in the first), evinces more aggressive censorship, relying on deletions.<sup>22</sup> Once again, it deals with Christian persecution of Jews.<sup>23</sup> Here is the partners' version:

- a. "Whose mouths speak lies, and whose oaths are false" (Psalms 144:8).
- b. One time, they decreed forced apostasy (*shemadot*) upon Israel to cause them to give up their law (*le-ha'avir me'al datam*), to baptize them in water (*le-hatbilam ba-mayim*),<sup>24</sup> and to leave the Lord, the God of Israel, to seize the foreign faith (*emunat ha-nokhri'ah*). And Israel busied to flee from their place.
- c. There were many lords who showed themselves to be comrades (*ohavim*) and they said, "Come to us and we will shield you from your enemies." They came unto them and they killed them. Therefore, they said, "A Jew should not commune with a foreigner."<sup>25</sup>

The editors of the second edition introduced a number of changes into this pericope. First, they eliminated the term "forced apostasy" (*shemadot*) and the phrase "to baptize them in water" (*le-hatbilam ba-mayim*). Second, they modified the phrase "the foreign faith" (*emunat ha-nokhri'ah*) to "a foreign faith" (*emunat nokhri'ah*). Third, they modified the statement "a Jew should not

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<sup>22</sup> At this point in Froben's edition, the sequence of passages falls one behind the Bologna edition do to the absence of §681 because the pericope numbered §681 in the partners' edition is mis-numbered §421 in Froben's edition.

<sup>23</sup> The case discussed in the pericope is of Christians failing to protect their Jewish neighbors from Crusaders, Kenneth R. Stow, *Alienated Minority: the Jews of Medieval Latin Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009) 108.

<sup>24</sup> On baptismal water's negative associations among Ashkenazi Jews, see Einbinder, *Beautiful Death*, 32.

<sup>25</sup> This is the wording of the partners' edition. Words and phrases that are altered or removed in the Froben edition are in bold.

אשר פיהם דבר שוא וימינם ימין שקר פעם אחד [כך] גזרו **שמדות** על ישראל להעבירם מעל דתם **להטבילם במים** ולעזוב את ה' אלהי ישראל לתפוס **אמונת הנכרים** וישראל עוסקים לברוח ממקומם והיו לרבים שרים שהיו מראים את עצמם כאוהבים ואמרו תבואו אלינו ונגן עליכם כנגד אויביכם באו אצלם והרגום לכך אמרו אל יתחד יהודי עם נכרי.

commune with a foreigner” (*al yityahed yehudi im nokhri*) to “a Jew should not commune with an Egyptian or someone similar them” (*al yityahed yehudi im mizri ve-domeihem*).<sup>26</sup>

The first of the two deletions concerns the Hebrew term *shemadot* (“forced apostasy”). As discussed in chapter two, the root of *shemad* denotes “destruction” and “cutting off.”<sup>27</sup> In antiquity, it came to signify the forced conversion of Jews at the hands of the Roman emperor Hadrian (c. 135 CE) and other subsequent experiences of forced conversion.<sup>28</sup> Despite the fact that Church doctrine had long maintained that baptism could not be coerced, instances of forced baptism occurred throughout the medieval and early modern periods.<sup>29</sup> The ambivalence of Christians toward forced conversion and the negative associations of the root of *shemad*—that a person who had been forcefully converted had been “destroyed” or “cut off”—triggered Christian indignation.

In the case of the pericope above, it was relatively easy to remove the offensive word *shemad* from the text without altering its essential meaning. “They decreed forced apostasy upon Israel to cause them to give up their law” became, in the second edition, “They decreed upon Is-

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<sup>26</sup> This is the wording of the Froben edition with inserted text in bold.

אשר פיהם דבר שוא וימינם ימין שקר. פעם אחד גזרו על ישראל להעבירם מעל דתם ולעזוב את ה' אלהי ישראל לתפוס **אמונה נכריה** וישראל עוסקים לברוח ממקומם והיו לרבים שרים שהיו מראים את עצמם כאוהבים ואמרו תבואו אלינו ונגן עליכם כנגד אויביכם באו אצלם והרגום לכך אמרו אל יתיחד יהודי עם **מצרי ודומהם**.

<sup>27</sup> See above, as well as, Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim...*, s.v. “שמד.”

<sup>28</sup> Saul Lieberman, *Tosefta Kifshuta*, Vol. 3 [Hebrew] (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1962) 402 n.45 cited in Chaim Milikowsky, “Gehenom u-poshei Yisrael al pi ‘Seder Olam’” *Tarbiz* 55, no. 3 (1986): 333 n. 94, my translation. Note that this term differs from its cousins, the noun *meshummad* and the verb *nishtamed*, discussed in chapter two. While those terms do not necessarily refer to “forced conversion,” the noun in question does. See Langer, *Cursing the Christians*, ch. 2 n. 35.

<sup>29</sup> The principle that baptism cannot be coerced dates to Pope Gregory the Great’s (sixth century) bull *Sicut Judaeis*. Christians debated both the efficacy of forced baptism and what precisely constituted illegal coercion throughout the medieval and early modern periods, *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 2nd ed., s.v. “Baptism, forced;” see also, Piet van Boxel, *Jewish Books in Christian Hands: Theology, Exegesis and Conversion Under Gregory XIII (1572-1585)* (Vatican: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2016) 29-30.

rael to cause them to give up their law.” Froben’s editors eliminated the subjective judgement signified by the word *shemad* but the events recorded remained the same.

Similarly, Froben’s editors deleted the phrase “to baptize them in water” (*le-hatbilam bamayim*). This modification did not radically transform the story—the concept that Jews were forcefully converted remained in place. Nonetheless, by deleting this phrase, the editors eliminated the only direct reference to Christianity in the pericope. Further, by transforming “the foreign faith” (*emunat ha-nokhri’ah*) to “a foreign faith” (*emunat nokhri’ah*)—eliminating the direct article, the Hebrew letter *hey*—the editors introduced a note of ambiguity. Through this change, they presented Judaism not in direct conflict with a single specific faith; readers could no longer assume the antagonists in the passage were exclusively Christians.

Ammon Raz-Krakovitzkin has called this kind of modification an attempt to “create an alternative definition of the Jew” that was “formulated more positively and not based on confrontation with the other.”<sup>30</sup> While self-understanding necessarily involves comparison to an other, to say that early modern Jewish identity “based on confrontation with” Christianity seems too extreme. The emendations Froben’s editors made in this pericope allowed the story of persecution—and thus Jewish self-understanding as a persecuted people—to remain in place while blurring the identity of their antagonists. Whether readers continued to assume the antagonists in the pericope above were Christians—and whether the identity of the antagonists mattered to Jewish readers—is an open question.

Indeed, Froben’s editors modified the last sentence of section (c), the moral of the tale, emphasizing this ambiguity. In the first edition, the moral was that a Jew should not fraternize

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<sup>30</sup> Raz-Krakovitzkin, *The Censor, the Editor and the Text*, 133.

with a “foreigner” (*nokhri*). This was the partners’ innovation; the manuscript witnesses read *goy*.<sup>31</sup> However, here, unlike in the pericope above, Froben’s editors replaced *nokhri* with a fascinating alternative, the phrase *mizri ve-domeihem* (“an Egyptian or someone similar them”). This alteration is an example of the phenomenon of “anachronization”—transforming a term of opprobrium in the present into a reference to a people or peoples of the past. Further, introducing of the word *domeihem* (“someone similar them”) added another note of ambiguity. Readers could no longer assume that the antagonists in question were Christians; in fact, they could be one of a number of groups. On one level, we might infer that this sort of modification impeded readers from associating the persecutors in the passage with Christians. At the same time, one wonders whether the word “*domeihem*” in fact implicitly preserved the possibility that Jewish readers could continue to read this passage as a critique of Jewish-Christian fraternizing. Could readers have understood this passage as implying that the people “similar to the Egyptians” in their own day were in fact Christians? This may have been a possibility given that the Hebrew term *mizri* (“Egyptian”) was aurally similar to *nozri* (“Christian”).<sup>32</sup>

The second edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* is rife with examples of pericopes where Froben’s editors anachronized terms that stoked Christian readers’ ire. One notable example concerns a pericope discussed earlier, in chapter two, §429, about Christian clergy and Hebrew books. The second half of the passage, quoted in full in chapter two, raises the question of Jews’ relations with individuals identified as *minim* (translated literally as “sectarians”). The relevant sections of the pericope are below:

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<sup>31</sup> See MS Parma 3280 §250 and MS JTS (former) Boesky 45 §114.

<sup>32</sup> I am again indebted to Elisheva Carlebach for this suggestion.

- c. If there is a Bible (i.e. *Tanakh*, lit. “the twenty-four books”) that a sectarian (*min*) wrote and didn’t inscribe with his name or the name of a foreign deity (*shem le’avodah zarah*) or the name of a holy thing (*kadesh*)<sup>33</sup>, don’t store it with Jewish books (i.e. books written by Jews), for “For the rod of wickedness shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous” (Psalms 125:3).<sup>34</sup>
- d. If there is a sectarian (*min*) who wants to make a hymn to a foreign deity (*piyyut le’avodah zarah*) or a foreigner (*nokhri*) wants to make [a poem in honor of] a sin (*le’averah*) and he says to a Jew, “Sing me a pleasant melody with which you praise your God.” Don’t sing to him, so that [his transgression] will not occur because of you.<sup>35</sup>

As would be expected, in the version of this pericope in Froben’s edition, the editors replaced the phrase *avodah zarah* with *avodat elilim* (“idol worship”). Interestingly, they did not replace the word *nokhri*.<sup>36</sup> They did, however, replace the term *min* (“sectarian”) with the Hebrew appellation *Zadoki* (“Sadducee”).<sup>37</sup>

As discussed in chapter two, the word *min* is not original to this pericope, the partners used it in place of *galah*. The partners likely believed *min* was a preferable alternative because it was used in rabbinic texts to refer to sectarians generally. However, by the medieval period, it became a derogatory designation for Christians.<sup>38</sup> Froben’s editors sought greater specificity and

<sup>33</sup> From other uses of this term in *Sefer Hasidim* (§198) it appears this term can refer both to things and to places, i.e. places of worship.

<sup>34</sup> Here I favor the JPS (1917) translation; its syntax is closer to the Hebrew original.

<sup>35</sup> This is the wording of the partners’ edition. Words and phrases that were subsequently altered or removed in the Froben edition are in bold.

אם יש כ"ד ספרים שכתבו **מין** ולא הזכיר בו שם **ע"ז** ולא שם קדש לא יצניענו עם שום ספרי ישראל כי לא ינוח שבט הרשע על גורל הצדיקים אם יש **מין** שרוצה לעשות פיוט **לע"ז** או נכרי שרוצה לעשות לעבירה ואומר ליהודי אמור לי נגון נעים שאתם משבחים בו לאלהיכם אל יאמר לו שלא יהא על ידו.

<sup>36</sup> Why Froben’s editors chose not to replace *nokhri* in this passage is unclear to me. Perhaps it was simply an oversight, though that is surprising because the passage was heavily edited.

<sup>37</sup> This is the wording in Froben’s edition with emendations in bold.

אם יש כ"ד ספרים שכתבו **צדוקי** ולא הזכיר בו שם **ע"ז** ולא שם קדש לא יצניענו עם שום ספרי ישראל כי לא ינוח שבט הרשע על גורל הצדיקים אם יש **צדוקי** שרוצה לעשות פיוט **לע"ז** או נכרי שרוצה לעשות לעבירה ואומר ליהודי אמור לי נגון נעים שאתם משבחים בו לאלהיכם אל יאמר לו שלא יהא על ידו:

<sup>38</sup> See chapter two and Langer, *Cursing the Christians?*, 70-78.

thus replaced references to *minim* with references to Sadducees, a Jewish schismatic group from the Second Temple period. Once again, in making these replacements, Froben's editors made it unambiguous that the people in question in the passage were not Christians. They thus, to paraphrase Raz-Krakotzkin, radically transformed the "polemical dimension" of the text, reshaping a Jewish polemic against Christianity in the present into an artifact of an internal Jewish dispute of the past.<sup>39</sup>

The decision to replace *min* with Sadducee, in the context of this pericope in particular, hints at the sophistication of Froben's editors' efforts. Section (c) of this passage uses a quotation from the Book of Psalms—"For the rod of wickedness shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous" (125:3)—as a proof-text for the notion that one should not store non-Jewish books beside Jewish books. The non-Jewish books are equated with "the rod of wickedness" and Jewish books are called "the lot of the righteous." However, the term "righteous" (*ẓaddikim*) is etymologically related to the Hebrew word for Sadducee (*Ẓadoki*)—a play on words. This anachronizing alteration was thus more than an act of censorship, it also demonstrated Froben's editors' sensitivity to the literary qualities of the text. The modifications they introduced very often harmonized with the text in such a way that, in many cases, they did not appear to be interpolations at all.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> For other references to Sadducees in Froben's edition, see §977 (compare to §982 in the partners' edition) and §433.

<sup>40</sup> Froben's editors made other anachronizing replacements throughout their edition. In §280, Froben's editors replaced the word *komer* ("priest") with the appellation "*Aramai*," which may be translated literally as "Syrian," but which referred to Roman pagans in rabbinic literature, see Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim...*, s.v.. "ארמאי" and the sources cited therein, especially PT Shevi'it 4:2 where a Roman pagan juxtaposed with a Jewish Judean, "יהודי ירודי או ארמאי ארמאי." See also the Aramaic incantation reproduced in Dan Levene, "May These Curses Go Out and Flee" in *Magical and Religious Literature of Late Antiquity*, vol. 2: (Leiden: Brill, 2013) 98, where the term is once again juxtaposed with "יהודי." Levene translates it as "pagan." Elsewhere, the term "Egyptian" (*mizri*) replaces *komer*, see §433 and §829 (compare to §832 in the partners' edition). Froben's editors also use the term *apikoros* ("heretic") as a replacement for *galah*, as in §296, where it's juxtaposed with Sadducee, see Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim...*, s.v.. "אפיקורוס" and the examples cited herein, especially BT Hagigah 5b.

Beyond anachronizing troubling terms, Froben's editors also "universalized" statements—transforming references to Christians into those that could be applied to all people. For example, §698 in Froben's edition, which describes another instance of Jewish persecution, is translated below according to partners' text (where it is numbered §699):

- a. Two are sitting and *goyim* demand to kill one of them. If one is a scholar (*talmid ḥakham*) and the other is a layman (*hedyot*), it is commanded that the layman say, "Kill me and not my friend."
- b. [This is] like Rabbi Reuven ben Istrobli<sup>41</sup> who demanded that they kill him and not Rabbi Akiva, since the masses needed Rabbi Akiva.<sup>42</sup>

In the version of this brief pericope in Froben's edition, the editors replaced the term *goyim* with the far more ambiguous alternative, "enemies" (*oyevim*).<sup>43</sup> Unlike the anachronizing replacements discussed above, by replacing a troubling term with a generic one, Froben's editors made it possible for the antagonists in the tale to be anyone with a nefarious plot—Jew or Christian. In this way, they, once again, eliminated the polemical dimension of a passage. It became a story about a person's proper conduct when faced with life or death situation.

Perhaps the most aggressive form of censoring in the second printed edition of *Sefer Hasidim* are instances where Froben's editors eliminated whole sentences. One example of this approach is §191. Here is the translated text from the partners' edition:

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<sup>41</sup> I have not been able to locate the precise source of this tradition. R. Reuven b. Istrobli is mentioned in a series of tales about his efforts to avert Roman persecution in BT Me'ilah 16b-17a, see Richard Kalmin, *Migrating Tales: The Talmud's Narratives and Their Historical Context* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2014) 55-60, but this source does not mention his decision to sacrifice himself for Akiva. Adolph Jellinek, *Bet ha'midrash: midrashim ketanim yeshanim u'ma'amarim shonim*, vol. 6 (Vienna: Winter Brothers, 1873), 28, describes R. Reuven sacrificing himself for R. Judah b. Bava.

<sup>42</sup> שנים שיושבים ובקשו גוים להרוג אחד מהם אם אחד תלמיד חכם והשני הדיוט מצוה להדיוט לומר' הרגוני ולא חבירי כר [כך] ראובן בן איצטובולי שבקש שיהרגוהו ולא לרבי עקיבא כי רבים היו צריכים לר' עקיבא.

<sup>43</sup> Here is Froben's text:

שנים שיושבי' ובקשו אויבי' להרוג אחד מהם אם אחד תלמי' חכם והשני הדיוט מצוה להדיוט לומר' הרגוני ולא חבירי כר' ראובן בן איצטובולי שבקש שיהרגוהו ולא לרבי עקיבא כי רבים היו צריכים לר' עקיבא:  
They use the same approach in the adjacent passages, §700 (numbered §699 in the second edition) and §703.

- a. A Jew who converts, we give him a nickname, as it says, “They that make them shall be like unto them (Psalms 115:8).”<sup>44</sup> “Like unto them” one should name him, for example, if his name is Abraham, he may be called, Aphram, and so forth.<sup>45</sup>
- b. And this is the case even for a righteous man (*ẓaddik*), and they stray after him, for example Simon Cephas, about whom they said, *Peter Ḥamor* (lit. “firstborn ass”).<sup>46</sup>

This passage draws on an obscure medieval tradition about Simon Cephas, known to Christians as the apostle Peter, originating in a number of the *Toledot Yeshu* manuscripts.<sup>47</sup> The *Toledot Yeshu* was a medieval treatise that mocked Jesus and his circle and is extant in several distinct manuscript witness. These manuscripts depicted Simon as a pious and ascetic Jew, a composer of liturgical poetry (*piyyutim*), who sought to prevent Christians from throwing off the yoke of *halakhah* and deifying Jesus. Yet, despite his best intentions, he became, in Wout van Bakkum’s words, “a sign of faith for the Christians.”<sup>48</sup> Our pericope describes Simon similarly as a “righteous man” (*ẓaddik*) who nonetheless caused Christians to desert Judaism. Because of this, he earned the nickname “*Peter Ḥamor*,” a play on the Greek name Jesus gave to Simon in Matthew 16:18—Peter, meaning “rock,” itself a translation of “Cephas” in Aramaic—and the biblical tra-

<sup>44</sup> Here, I have provided the JPS (1917) translation which is closer to the syntax of the Hebrew.

<sup>45</sup> The name Aphram and Avram are phonologically similar. Avram was, of course, the patriarch Abraham’s name prior to his covenant with YHWH (Genesis 17:5). It is thus a reminder of the person’s apostasy. I thank Elisheva Calebach for this insight. According to Reuven Margoliot, the name Aphram is related to the word *efer* (dust). He cites the view of R. Chaim Joseph David Azulai (1724-1806), a noted commentator on *Sefer Ḥasidim*, in whose responsa, *Yosef Ometz*, this passage appears. Azulai stated that a nickname given to an apostate should sound like the name he was known by among non-Jews (Jerusalem, 1961; Bar Ilan Responsa Project) 11.

<sup>46</sup> This is the version of the pericope in the partners’ edition. The bolded text was removed in Froben’s edition.  
יהודי שהמיר מכנין לו שם שני' כמוהם יהיו עושיהם כמוהם יש לכנות לו כגון אם שמו אברהם יקרא אפרם וכן כיוצא בזה ואפי' לצדיק והם תועים אחרייו כגון שמעון כיפה שאומרים פטר חמור.

<sup>47</sup> For a summary of these variations see, Peter Schäfer and Michael Meerson, *Toledot Yeshu: The Life Story of Jesus*, eds. Peter Schäfer, Michael Meerson and Yaacov Deutsch (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014) 113-119.

<sup>48</sup> Wout van Bakkum, “The Poetical Qualities of the Apostle Peter in Jewish Folktales,” *Zutot* 3, no. 1 (2003): 17; see also John Gager, “Simon Peter, the Founder of Christianity or the Savior of Israel?” in *Toledot Yeshu*, 221–245.



dition of redeeming the firstborn ass, known as *peter hamor* (Exodus 13:3). Froben's editors, not surprisingly, radically altered this passage, eliminating section (b) entirely.<sup>49</sup>

A similar form of censorship occurred in the next pericope, §192, below, in the partners' edition's rendering:

- a. Why weren't the names of the angels revealed in the Torah? Lest they made them into gods. Because one day in the year, they make a feast day (*yom eid*) for Michael and spread lies about him.<sup>50</sup>
- b. In the future, He denounces (*mekatreg*) them. As it is written, "And at that time shall Michael stand up" (Daniel 12:1),<sup>51</sup> "your prince" (10:21).<sup>52</sup>

Froben's editors truncated this pericope, leaving only the introductory question and answer in section (a): "Why weren't the names of the angels revealed in the Torah? Lest they made them into gods."<sup>53</sup> Their rationale likely stemmed from the possibility that readers might interpret the implied subject—the unspecified "they"—as a reference to Christians; Christians who celebrated the Feast of St. Michael (Michaelmas) and venerated him as the celestial guardian of the Church.<sup>54</sup>

Such substantial truncation was likely warranted because of the extent of the charges against the antagonists, presumably Christians. As discussed in chapter two, Christians were

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<sup>49</sup> This is the shortened text of the pericope in Froben's edition.

יהודי שהמיר והלך לעבוד ע"א מכנין לו שנ' כמוהם יהיו עושיהם. כמוהם יש לכנות לו כגון אם שמו אברהם יקרא אפרם וכן כיוצא בזה:

<sup>50</sup> On the meaning of this passage, see Joseph Dan, *Hasidut Ashkenaz be-toldot ha-mahshavah ha-Yehudit*, vol. 1 (Tel Aviv: Open University of Israel, 1990) 86.

<sup>51</sup> Again, the JPS (1917) translation preserves the syntax of the Hebrew.

<sup>52</sup> This is the partners' edition's text:

למה לא נתגלו בתורה שמות המלאכים פן יעשום אלוהות שהרי יום אחד בשנה עושין יום איד מיכאל ומחפאין עליו דברי שק לעתיד לבא מקטרג עליהם וכתוב בעת ההיא יעמוד מיכאל שרכם.

<sup>53</sup> למה לא נתגלו בתורה שמות המלאכים פן יעשום אלוהות:

<sup>54</sup> See *Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v. "St. Michael the Archangel" and *Encyclopedia of Angels*, s.v. "Michael."

troubled by the application of the term *eid* to their festivals. In rabbinic texts, the word was used exclusively for idolatrous observances, in contrast to Jewish *ḥagim*.<sup>55</sup> Domenico in his handbook, called this term, “language of derision” (*lashon ḥerpah*) and prescribed that it be “erased completely.”<sup>56</sup> Similarly, Christian readers would have rejected the assertion that they transformed angelic figures into gods and that they would be denounced at the end of days by the very angel they currently celebrated. Most importantly, in Froben’s editors’ truncated version of the pericope, they universalized a statement that previously referred only to Christians. In the new formulation, the text warned all readers they could be the very “they” who fell into the trap of confusing angels with the Divinity and eliminated all references to Michael—a revered figure for Christians (and Jews). In doing so, they were no longer susceptible to the charge of blasphemy.<sup>57</sup>

Many of the techniques of censorship that Froben’s editors undertook in their edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* are familiar to students of Froben’s Babylonian Talmud, produced under the supervision of the censor, Marco Marini of Brescia. In the Talmud, Marini and his colleagues replaced anti-Christian terms with more neutral or anachronistic alternatives—*meshummad* with *mumar*, *min* with Sadducee or *apikoros*. They eliminated full passages that depicted Jesus.<sup>58</sup> But their efforts went further still. Marini and his colleagues also deleted, modified or glossed passages that contained terms and descriptions they considered immodest or vulgar; laws and practices that applied differently to Jews and non-Jews; and passages that depicted God anthropo-

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<sup>55</sup> See Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim*, s.v. “אֵיד” and the citations therein, especially BT Avodah Zarah 7a.

<sup>56</sup> Prebor, “Sefer ha-Zikkuk,” 54, my translation.

<sup>57</sup> Other examples of this sort of truncation include, §277 and §864 (numbered §861 in Froben’s edition).

<sup>58</sup> BT Sanhedrin 43a, see William Popper, *The Censorship of Hebrew Books* (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1899) 56.

morphically. Even the word *talmud* was eliminated—as it had been condemned by the Church in the Tridentine Index of 1563 and they did not print tractate Avodah Zarah at all.<sup>59</sup>

The eagerness with which Marini and others deleted, adapted and glossed problematic passages in Froben's Talmud should not lead one to assume their efforts were comprehensive. Joseph Prijs has noted that Aramaicized variations of the word *talmud* found their way into several tractates.<sup>60</sup> The censorship of the Froben Talmud, like much sixteenth-century censorship, was intensive but far from comprehensive. Indeed, Debora Shuger has characterized early modern censorship as “a haphazard affair, less a matter of systematic repression than intermittent crackdowns in response to such local contingencies as an ambassador's protest, a foreign-policy crisis, a conflict between court factions, or the need to placate a political ally.”<sup>61</sup> The same can be said for Froben's edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim*. Aside from editorial oversights—the appearance of small words such as *goy* that were removed in most cases—there are some cases where Froben's editors made no changes to pericopes where we might have reasonably assumed they would.

One example of this inconsistency is §802 (numbered §805 in the partners' edition). This pericope describes King Ahasuerus as an *arel* (literally, an “uncircumcised man”) who repeatedly rapes Queen Esther. The term *arel* was used in rabbinic literature to refer to non-Jews in particu-

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<sup>59</sup> On the condemnation of the word Talmud, see Fausto Parente, “The Index, the Holy Office and the Condemnation of the Talmud and Publication of Clement VIII's Index” in *Church, Censorship and Culture in Early Modern Italy*, ed. Gigliola Fragnito, trans. Adrian Belton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 166-167. On the extensive censoring of Froben's Talmud, see Raphael Nathan Nata Rabinovicz, *Ma'amar al hadpasat ha-Talmud* (Munich, 1877) 68-70; Popper, *The Censorship of Hebrew Books*, 55-62.

<sup>60</sup> Joseph Prijs, *Die basler hebräischen Drucke*, 179.

<sup>61</sup> Debora Shuger, *Censorship and Cultural Sensibility: The Regulation of Language in Tudor-Stuart England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013) 2.

lar.<sup>62</sup> Elsewhere in Froben's edition, the editors replaced *arel* with other terms, including "enemy" and "Egyptian."<sup>63</sup> It is likely that Froben's editors chose not to replace the term here because it referred to a non-Christian gentile from antiquity and could not be understood as a reference to non-Jews in the present. In Domenico's handbook, he explicitly referred to texts like this, when he wrote, "Any insult that denigrates the foreskin, it is necessary to specify [that it refers to a case] in the past."<sup>64</sup> In this way, certain references to non-Jews as "*arelim*" remained in the text.

At the same time, it is surprising that Froben's editors did not modify passages that did not look favorably on Christian nobles. *Sefer Ḥasidim* is replete with tales—many negative—about Christian noblemen and yet Froben's editors did not alter them. They did not modify §533, for example, which prohibits Jews from showing Torah scrolls to the *sarei ha'melekh* ("the king's princes").<sup>65</sup> Domenico called for the erasure of those passages that "criticize a king or prince (*melekh o-sar*)" in *Sefer ha-Zikkuk*.<sup>66</sup> Yet Froben's editors did nothing about such passages in their edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim*. Perhaps, they assumed that such stories referred to pre-Christian nobles of antiquity, rather than Christians of the present day. Regardless, these stories were ambiguous enough that they did not merit modification.

## La'az

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<sup>62</sup> See Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim...*, s.v. "ערל" and the citations therein, especially M. Nedarim 3:11 which refers to the term being used specifically for uncircumcised gentiles, and not uncircumcised Jews.

<sup>63</sup> See §433 and §703. The latter term "Egyptian" is ironic since Egyptians were known throughout antiquity for practicing circumcision, see Herodotus, *The History of Herodotus*, vol. 1, trans. G. C. Macaulay (London: Macmillan, 1904) book ii, ch. 35, 132.

<sup>64</sup> Prebor, "Sefer ha-Zikkuk," 53, my translation.

<sup>65</sup> See also §270 and §790 (§787 in Froben).

<sup>66</sup> Prebor, "Sefer ha-Zikkuk," 54, my translation.

We have already explored how Froben's editors "anachronized" pericopes—transforming depictions of Christians and Christianity that might have offended Christian readers into references to (harmless) peoples and groups from antiquity. Froben's editors replaced "sectarian" (*min*) with "Sadducee," for instance, and "priest" (*komer*) with "Aramean." This technique also had an additional effect: It made the text appear more ancient than it actually was. *Sefer Hasidim*, of course, was composed in medieval Ashkenaz and is replete with references to that milieu—from stories of friars and knights, to words and phrases in the Ashkenazic vernaculars, Judeo-French and Judeo-German.<sup>67</sup> However, by introducing references to Sadducees, Arameans, Egyptians, Epicureans and others from the Second Temple period, Froben's editors plunged *Sefer Hasidim* into the world of Greco-Roman Palestine. This served Luzzatto's larger interest of presenting *Sefer Hasidim* as a work of rabbinic classical *aggadah*.

One way Froben's editors furthered this process of anachronization was by eliminating the linguistic traces of *Sefer Hasidim*'s medieval origins, that is, words and phrases in Judeo-French and Judeo-German. This effort is evident in pericopes such as §419, which discusses the practice of swearing oaths. Here is a translation of the partners' edition's version:

- a. One Jew, the *goyim* libeled him and said to him, "You did such-and-such to us. You have to swear this is not the case." He swore truthfully.
- b. He said to a sage (*hakham*), "I regret that I swore, even though I swore truthfully, and against my will I was forced to swear in order that they would not kill me, since my mother and father never swore, even truthfully."

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<sup>67</sup> The question of how much the *Hasidei Ashkenaz* were influenced by surrounding Christian culture is fraught and will be discussed in greater detail in the conclusion to this dissertation. However, it is impossible to overlook the numerous references to the surrounding Christian culture in *Sefer Hasidim* and the work's "embeddedness" in its medieval milieu. See most recently, Elisheva Baumgarten, *Mothers and Children: Jewish Family Life in Medieval Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); David I. Shyovitz, "He Has Created a Remembrance of His Wonders: Nature and Embodiment in the Thought of the *Hasidei Ashkenaz*," (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2011).

- c. The sage said to him, “If you wish to atone for this, accept upon yourself that you will not mention God’s name (*shem shamayim*), not truthfully and not in vain, not in *la’az*, and not in any language, like one is accustomed to say thusly, ‘The Lord help me!’ (Psalms 109:26) You may not say this unless you are reading the [biblical] verse. Even, you may not use [such expressions] in commerce, except if you will be able to trust [someone] without an oath, in order that it will not result in you [swearing] an oath.”<sup>68</sup>

In this pericope, a group of non-Jews accuse a Jew of a crime he did not commit and force him, against his will, to swear an oath to this effect. Subsequently, the Jew regrets the oath and seeks the advice of a sage on how best to atone for his misdeed. R. Judah he-Ḥasid and his circle condemned the practice of oath-swearing, despite the fact that it was an especially common (and necessary) feature of medieval commerce.<sup>69</sup> In the first printed edition, the sage advises the Jew, “Accept upon yourself that you will not mention God’s name (*shem shamayim*), not truthfully and not in vain, not in *la’az*, and not in any language.”

Froben’s editors made two significant adjustments to this pericope.<sup>70</sup> First, as would be expected, in section (a), the word *nokhri'im* (foreigners) replaced *goyim*. Secondly, and most interestingly, in section (c), the editors eliminated the phrase, “not in *la’az*.” The term *la’az* referred to the vernacular languages spoken in medieval Ashkenaz—medieval German and Old

<sup>68</sup> This is the partners’ edition’s wording. Words subsequently altered in the Froben edition are in bold.

יהודי אחד העלילו עליו **הגוי'** ואמרו לו כך וכך עשית לנו והוצרך לישבע שלא עשה ונשבע באמת אמר לחכם אני מצטער שנשבעתי אע"פ שאמת נשבעתי ובעל כרחי הוצרכתי לישבע כדי שלא ימיתו אותי לפי שאבי ואמי לא נשבעו מעולם אפילו באמת אמר ליה החכם אם תרצה שיתכפר לך קבל עליך שלא תזכיר שם שמים לא באמת ולא בחנם ולא **בלעז** ולא בשום לשון כמו שרגילים לומר כך יעזרני ה' ואתה אל תאמר כך אלא כשתקרא בפסוק ואפילו אל יהי לך משא ומתן אלא אם כן תוכל להאמין בלא שבועה כדי שלא יביאך לידי שבועה.

<sup>69</sup> Samuel He'Hasid, Judah's father, may even have been exiled from Speyer because he sought to prevent his co-religionists from swearing oaths, see Ephraim Shoham-Steiner, “Mi'Shpeyer l'Regensburg: n'dodei mishpahat he'hasid mi'hevel ha'Rhine l'hevel Danube,” *Zion* 81, no. 2 (2016): 168-169.

<sup>70</sup> This is the wording if Froben’s edition with emendations in bold.

יהודי אחד העלילו עליו **הנכרים** ואמרו לו כך וכך עשית לנו. והוצרך לישבע שלא עשה ונשבע באמת. אמר לחכם אני מצטער שנשבעתי אף על פי שאמת נשבעתי ובעל כרחי הוצרכתי לישבע כדי שלא ימיתו אותי לפי שאבי ואמי לא נשבעו מעולם אפילו באמת. אמר ליה החכם אם תרצה שיתכפר לך קבל עליך שלא תזכיר שם שמים לא באמת ולא בחנם. ולא בשום לשון כמו שרגילים לומר כך יעזרני ה' ואתה אל תאמר כך אלא כשתקרא בפסוק ואפילו אל יהי לך משא ומתן אלא אם כן תוכל להאמין בלא שבועה כדי שלא יביאך לידי שבועה:

French.<sup>71</sup> In Froben's edition, the sage's advice thus reads as follows, "If you wish to atone for this, accept upon yourself that you will not mention God's name, not truthfully and not in vain, and not in any language...."

Why would Froben's editors eliminate the phrase "not in *la'az*?" Given that they preserved the phrase, "not in any language," it is clear they were not troubled by the concept of swearing oaths—like the *Hasidei Ashkenaz*—or that Jews used languages other than the *lashon ha-kodesh* (rabbinic Hebrew/Aramaic, literally, the "holy tongue,") in their oaths. Rather, I contend, eliminating the phrase "not in *la'az*," was an attempt to remove the linguistic residue of the medieval European milieu in which *Sefer Hasidim* was composed and present *Sefer Hasidim* as a canonical work, akin to other classical rabbinic works.

§3 contains another another instance of anachronization that, significantly, appears on the first pages of both editions.<sup>72</sup> This passage discusses the proper way a pious person ought to make mention of the name of God. In the first edition, text gives formulas in both Hebrew and *la'az*: "Every time that we mention the Lord, the honored and awesome, we are obligated to bless Him in the holy tongue (*lashon ha-kodesh*) [with the words] 'May His name be

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<sup>71</sup> The term *la'az* has frequently been mistaken as an acronym for the Hebrew expression *lashon am zar* ("in a foreign tongue." On its use in the medieval period, see Kirsten A. Fudeman, "Glosses of Hebrew: Medieval French." *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*, ed. Geoffrey Khan (Brill Online, 2016, accessed 17 March 2016). There appears to be little scholarship on the *le'azim* in *Sefer Hasidim*, and further, their relation to the *le'azim* in other medieval Hebrew texts, such as Rashi's commentaries. On the linguistic peculiarities of *Sefer Hasidim* and its relationship to Middle High German, see Chaim Rabin, "Zemanim u-derachim be-po'al she-be-lashon 'Sefer Hasidim,'" *Papers of the Fourth World Congress of Jewish Studies* 2 (1968): 113–16; Simha Kogot, "The Language of *Sefer Hasidim*" in *Studies in Medieval Jewish History and Literature*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Harvard University Center for Jewish Studies, 1984) 95–109. The passages discussed below are clearly derived from French.

<sup>72</sup> I emphasize the placement of this passage on the first page of these editions because the first pages of the work would no doubt be the most widely read and most visible passages in the text.

blessed' (*yitbarakh shemo*) and in the language of *la'az*, '*saint bendit et saint lui*.'"<sup>73</sup> The Old French phrase here is a translation of the Hebrew, literally: the "Holy Blessed One and Holy [be] He."<sup>74</sup> In Froben's edition, the editors removed the clause, "and in the language of *la'az*, '*saint bendit et saint lui*.'"

The pericope goes on to describe what one might say when one is speaking about a child or friend who has travelled far away: "When he mentions him, he says, 'My son, may peace be commended to him, may this day be good for him' '*bon jour et tel je a notre sire le comande*.'" The Old French phrase here may be translated as, "A good day and such to our Lord I recommend him."<sup>75</sup> In the case of this sentence, Froben's editors eliminated all the Old French words, leaving only the beginning Hebrew formula.

Further, in the first printed edition, the subsequent pericope, §4, repeats the idea discussed earlier, that a person who invokes God's name should follow with the words, "May His name be blessed" (*yitbarakh shemo*) in Hebrew or "*notre sire*" (our Lord) in *la'az*. It then goes on to tell the story of a pious bridegroom who "heard one of the singers during the dancing" at his wedding "mention the Lord in his song, '*le devin Dé*.'" This Old French expression may be

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<sup>73</sup> This is the full pericope in the partners' edition:

זכר צדיק לברכה זכר צדיקו של עולם לברכה בכל פעם ופעם שאנו מזכירים את ה' הנכבד והנורא חייבים אנו לברכו בלשון הקודש יתברך שמו ובלשון לעז שיי"ט בני"דט אישי"ט לואי"ין וחסידו הדעת יבינו משל זה לאדם אשר בנו הלך לדרך מרחקים או אוהבו כאשר מזכירו הוא אומר בני לשלום יפקד היום הזה יהיה טוב עליו בו"ן יור"א איטי"ל אוי"י אנוטר"א שיר"א לקמוני"דא ואם אדם שמת אומר מנוחתו כבוד. הקב"ה שהוא חי וקיים יתברך שמו של יוצרנו על אחת כמה וכמה שיש לברכו על הזכרת שמו שהוא חי וקיי' ית' שמו הנכבד או בשעה שאנו מזכירי' ממנו.

<sup>74</sup> Cyril Aslanov, e-mail message to author, November 3, 2016. I am especially grateful to Professor Cyril Aslanov for helping me transcribe and translate these phrases from *la'az*, here and in the following paragraphs. Professor Aslanov suggested to me that the partners' edition's text of this phrase is corrupt and should read,

שינ"ו בנדי"ט אישינ"ט לואי.

<sup>75</sup> Cyril Aslanov, e-mail message to author, November 3, 2016. The Old French phrase is a translation of the Hebrew.



translated as, “the Godly God.”<sup>76</sup> This pious bridegroom excommunicated the singer “each and every time” he sang God’s name without following it with the required formula.<sup>77</sup>

In Froben’s edition, the editors combined pericopes §3 and §4.<sup>78</sup> In combining them, they eliminated the first half of §4—the discussion of invoking God’s name with the proper response “May His name be blessed” in Hebrew and “*notre sire*” in *la’az*. They then proceeded directly to the story of the pious bridegroom, but removed the reference to the blasphemous vernacular song-lyrics. The clause reads simply, “He heard one of the singers during the dancing would mention the Lord in his song. This very pious man excommunicated him for each and every time [he said God’s name].”<sup>79</sup>

There are other of examples of the elimination of foreign words and phrases in the second printed edition of *Sefer Hasidim*.<sup>80</sup> I posit that this intervention was part of a larger effort to present *Sefer Hasidim* to readers as a venerable rabbinic text—a text on par with aggadic and midrashic corpora, such as *Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer*, *Genesis Rabbah*, or the *Zohar*, texts in the

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<sup>76</sup> Cyril Aslanov, e-mail message to author, November 3, 2016.

<sup>77</sup> אדם אפר דם מרה בשר בושה סריחה רימה איך הוא לוקח לעצמו פריצות להזכיר שם הנכבד והנורא אף בלשון לעז יתברך שמו יאמר **נוטרא שירא** ועל זה אמרו כל השומע הזכרה מפי חבירו צריך לגדותו ואם לא נדהו הוא עצמו בנידוי ומעשה בחסיד אחד שהיה יושב בבית החופה ושמע אחד מן המשוררים במחולות היה מזכיר את ה' בשירו **לידוין די** והיה אותו חסיד מנדהו על כל פעם ופעם וגם שדים אינם מזכירים שם שמים לבטלה כדא' במגילה ולחוש דילמא שד הוא גמירי דלא מפקי שם שמים לבטלה

<sup>78</sup> Interestingly, Froben’s editors left a trace reminder of the existence of §4 by not renumbering the passages, so the sequence of passages moves from §3 to §5.

<sup>79</sup> This is the full text of §3 in Froben’s edition:

זכר צדיק לברכה זכר צדיקו של עולם לברכה בכל פעם ופעם שאנו מזכירים את ה' הנכבד והנורא חייבים אנו לברכו בלשון הקודש יתברך שמו וחסיד הדעת יבינו משל זה לאדם אשר בנו הלך לדרך מרחקי' או אוהבו כאשר מזכירו הוא אומ' בני לשלוי' יפקד היום הזה יהיה טוב עליו. ומה אדם שמת אומר מנוחתו כבוד. הקב"ה שהוא חי וקיים יתברך שמו של יוצרינו על אחת כמה וכמה שיש לברכו על הזכרת שמו שהוא חי וקיים ית' שמו הנכבד. ועל זה אמרו כל השומע הזכרה מפי חבירו צריך לגדותו. ואם לא נדהו הוא עצמו בנידוי: ומעשה בחסיד אחד שהיה יושב בבית החופה ושמע אחד מן המשוררים במחולות היה מזכיר את ה' בשירו והיה אותו חסיד מנדהו על כל פעם ופעם. וגם שדים אינם מזכירים שם שמים לבטלה כדא' במגילה. ולחוש דילמא שד הוא גמירי דלא מפקי שם שמים לבטלה:

<sup>80</sup> See, for example, §53 and §61. It should be noted that like the censorship of this edition, this effort was not consistent; just as a number of terms that could be perceived as anti-Christian remained in their edition, so too a number of words in *la’az* persisted. But, by and large, the longer phrases in *la’az* were eliminated.

*lashon ha-kodesh*. The phrases in *la'az* that Froben's editors removed—especially those on the first page of the book—immediately distinguished *Sefer Ḥasidim* as of more recent origin. Indeed, the *Zohar* is an important point of comparison because it was deliberately composed in an artificial Aramaic dialect and purported to be a product of late-antique Palestine.<sup>81</sup> By removing *la'az* from the text, Froben's editors created an edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* that its readers might perceive as more similar to other ancient rabbinic works than the partners' edition.

In chapter two, I discussed R. Abraham b. Moses ha-Cohen's limited attempts to achieve a similar effect. In his introduction, Abraham admitted that readers might be put off by the existence of foreign words in the text. He expressed his hope that they would overlook these infelicities and embrace the work's timeless moral character. But Froben's editors—especially Luzzatto—were concerned not simply with *Sefer Ḥasidim*'s moral authority; they also sought to make a historical argument about *Sefer Ḥasidim*'s origins with their revisions: The foreign expressions in *Sefer Ḥasidim* were, in Luzzatto's words, “stammering, distorted and stiff language” that did not originate with the text itself.

Brian Richardson has noted a similar phenomenon in sixteenth-century editions of classical texts. The editors of these works frequently claimed to have removed generations of scribal corruptions and emendations, restoring them to their pristine original condition. However, “Their linguistic norms were in reality dictating the form of their texts.”<sup>82</sup> The governing principle behind editorial revision in this period, Richardson has argued, was creating “something beautiful

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<sup>81</sup> On the artificiality of Zoharic Aramaic, see Gershom Sholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken, 1946) 163-168. However, see Ada Rapoport-Albert and Theodore Kwasman, “Late Aramaic: The Literary and Linguistic Context of the Zohar,” *Aramaic Studies* 4, no. 1 (2006): 5-19 who propose that Zohar's dialect more closely resembles late antique precursors than previously assumed.

<sup>82</sup> Brian Richardson, *Print Culture in Renaissance Italy: The Editor and the Vernacular Text, 1470-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 184.

to behold, imparting ‘nitidezza’ or ‘pulitezza’ or purging stains.” Just as a “damaged statue was held to be improved by the restoration of missing limbs and by the polishing of its surface so that it appeared entire and new” texts could be improved by removing linguistic features that did not align with Renaissance ideals of grammar, syntax and diction.<sup>83</sup> By removing expressions in *la’az*—as well as by inserting references to the culture of Greco-Roman Palestine into the text—Froben’s editors performed a similar act, purifying the text of what they believed were late accretions and recovering the original form as a work of antiquity.

Finally, Froben’s editors made this case, by choosing to print their edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* in a square typeface. Armando Petrucci has described how typeface shaped the way ancient Roman readers interpreted urban inscriptions.<sup>84</sup> The same could be said for printed Hebrew works. It is notable, for example, that the partners’ edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* was printed in a semi-cursive typeface (commonly called Rashi-script), which printers generally used in non-canonical works, such as commentaries.<sup>85</sup> Froben’s editors, however, chose to print their edition in a square typeface that had, by the late-sixteenth century, become synonymous with canonical texts—such as the Bible and the Talmud, as well as the liturgy and medieval classics, including Maimonides’ *Mishneh Torah*. By employing a square typeface, Froben’s editors were once again, explicitly, presented *Sefer Ḥasidim* as one of the canonical, classical works of Judaism—and not as a work of secondary importance or derivative origin.

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<sup>83</sup> Richardson, *Print Culture in Renaissance Italy*, 185.

<sup>84</sup> Armando Petrucci, *Public Lettering: Script, Power, and Culture*, trans. Linda Lappin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993) 1-15.

<sup>85</sup> *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 2nd ed., s.v. “Typography” by Maurice Moshe Spitzer; A. M. Habermann, *Ha’seder ha’ivri b’hitpathuto: m’simanim l’otiyot u’me’megilah l’seder* (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1968).

## Punctuation, Emendations and Glosses

Froben's editors also sought to enhance the readability and clarity of their edition. These changes fall into three interrelated categories: punctuation; textual emendations; and explanatory glosses. These changes helped fulfill Luzzatto's goals of presenting *Sefer Ḥasidim* as a work of scripture and making its "pearls of wisdom" more accessible to students.

Many of these kinds of changes are found in §802. Below is the partners' version of this pericope.<sup>86</sup>

- a. "One should not be the bearer of bad news (*kalkalah*)" (BT Megillah 15a), [that is] precisely when you can say, "We can't learn anything from it." But, there are cases where if one were to share the bad news, one could be a remedy—to speak, as in the case of [the verse], "A fugitive brought the news to Abram the Hebrew," (Genesis 14:13) [that Lot had been taken captive]. If he had not told, he would have sinned more. Thus, if one does not tell about the sickness of one's friend, one will not inquire about a cure, just as [in the case of the verse], "Some time afterward, Joseph was told, 'Your father is ill'" (Genesis 48:1), in order that he would bring his sons with him [to see their grandfather]. Thus, Rabban Yohanan b. Zakai [said] to Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa that he should pray for his son—so that he might be cured (lit. remedied) he could tell him.<sup>87</sup> Or to testify on behalf of [a man's] wife, so that she might remarry and to make a remedy for the orphans.<sup>88</sup>
- b. If this is the case, why did Hathach not tell [the bad news] to Mordecai?<sup>89</sup> For, in his [Hathach's] eyes, it was bad that she did not want to come before the king and give herself over to death, to go to the King Ahashuarus. Further, he said that in order to give herself over to the king to be bedded

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<sup>86</sup> This pericope is numbered §805 in the first edition.

<sup>87</sup> This incident is found in BT Beraḥot 34b.

<sup>88</sup> This case, of course, refers to a "chained woman" (*agunah*), a woman whose husband has disappeared and whom Jewish law prohibits from remarrying until the husband's death has been ascertained.

<sup>89</sup> This example is based on Esther 4:5-16 and BT Megillah 15a, which record the traditions about Hetach—one of Ahashuarus's eunuchs who functioned as a go-between for Mordecai and Esther.

by him, she would be prohibited to Mordecai.<sup>90</sup> For until this point she was bedded by force, and now she presented herself to the foreskinned-one (*arel*).<sup>91</sup>

This pericope is based on a brief passage in the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Megillah, which uses the story of Queen Esther to teach the lesson that, “One should not be a bearer of bad news” (*en meshivin al ha-kalkalah*).<sup>92</sup> The pericope in *Sefer Ḥasidim* modified this teaching, arguing that one in fact can share bad news if doing so might lead to a positive outcome (literally, a remedy, *takkanah*).

The most obvious difference between the two printed versions of this pericope is that the partners’ edition lacks punctuation and Froben’s edition uses punctuation throughout.<sup>93</sup> In the partners’ edition, sentences and clauses run together; conjunctions, such as *vav*-conjunctive or the word *ve-khen* (“and thus”), imply distinctions. In the second edition, Froben’s editors were aggressive in their use of punctuation, breaking the text up into small syntactic units with colons

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<sup>90</sup> This refers to the midrashic tradition that Esther and Mordecai were husband and wife, see BT Megillah 13a.

<sup>91</sup> This is the text of the pericope in the partners’ edition:

אין משיבין על הקלקלה דוקא כשתוכל לומר לא נפק לן מינה אבל כשיש דברים שאם יגיד הקלקלה יכול להיות תקנה לדבר כגון ויבא הפליט ויגד לאברהם העברי ואם לא היה מגיד יותר היה חוטא וכן אם לא יגיד על החולה לאוהבו לא יחקור אחר רפואה כמו ויאמר ליוסף הנה אביך חולה כדי שיביא את בניו עמו וכן רבן יוחנן בן זכאי לרבי חנינא בן דוסא שיתפלל על בנו הרי לתקנתו יכול להגיד או להעיד בשביל אשתו להשיאה ולעשות תקנת היתומים אם כן התך למה לא השיב למרדכי כי היה רע בעיניו שלא רצתה לבא אל המלך ולמסור עמצה למות ללכת למלך אחשוורוש ועוד אמר שיש למסור עממה למלך להיות נבעלת לו ותהיה אסורה למרדכי כי עד עתה באונס היתה נבעלת ועתה ממצאיה עצמה לערל.

<sup>92</sup> This expression is also found in BT Avodah Zarah 10b and Yoma 77a.

<sup>93</sup> Indeed, punctuation was not absent in the first edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim*, it was far more infrequent than in the second edition. Generally, the partners divided pericopes into sections with apostrophes and blank spaces. However, these sections were frequently quite long.

and apostrophes (technically, superscript points) that function the way periods are used today.<sup>94</sup> The absence of punctuation dividing sentences and clauses was a hallmark of medieval Latin and Hebrew manuscripts.<sup>95</sup> When punctuation was used, generally, it was meant to assist in the oral declamation of a text.<sup>96</sup> With the advent of Hebrew printing, punctuation began to serve, according to Sinai Turan, a “syntactic-analytic” function—to visually divide between statements and phrases within a text.<sup>97</sup>

In the pericope above, in its rendering in Froben’s edition, a colon divides the text mid-way into two thematic sections, (a) and (b) above. Section (a) articulates the general principle that one can share bad news if it will provoke a positive response and offers examples of cases from the Bible and Talmud where this occurred. Section (b) provides the counter-example of Hathach, King Ahashuarus’s eunuch, who did not share his bad news. While the distinction between these sections can be inferred absent the colon; the colon shows the reader that the pericope has moved to a new idea and the following example differs from what preceded it.

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<sup>94</sup> This is the text in Froben’s edition. I have substituted periods for the original apostrophes to make the text more legible for modern readers. Emendations are in bold.

אין משיבין על הקלקלה דוקא כשתוכל לומר לא נפקא לן מינה אבל כשיש דברים שאם יגיד הקלקלה יכול להיות תקנה לדבר. כגון ויבא הפליט ויגד לאברהם העברי. ואם לא היה מגיד יותר היה חוטא. וכן אם לא יגיד על החולה לאוהבו לא יחקור אחר רפואה כמו ויאמר ליוסף הנה אביך חולה. כדי שיביא את בניו עמו. וכן רבן יוחנן בן זכאי לרבי חנינא בן דוסא שיתפלל על בנו. הרי לתקנתו יכול להגיד. או להעיד **על המת** בשביל אשתו להשיאה ולעשות תקנת היתומים: אם כן התך למה לא השיב למרדכי. כי היה רע בעיניו שלא רצתה לבא אל המלך ולמסור עצמה למות ללכת למלך אחשוורוש. ועוד אמר שיש למסור עצמה למלך להיות נבעלת לו ותהיה אסורה למרדכי כי עד עתה באונס הית' נבעלת ועתה ממציאה עצמה לערל **ברצון**:

<sup>95</sup> This kind of dividing punctuation became common first in liturgical texts—which had to be read aloud—and was not used in vernacular and non-religious texts through the later medieval period, Raymond Clemens and Timothy Graham, *Introduction to Manuscript Studies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007) 86; M. B. Parkes, *Pause and Effect: An Introduction to the History of Punctuation in the West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993) 44-49; Brian Richardson, *Manuscript Culture in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) 11.

<sup>96</sup> Clemens and Graham, *Introduction to Manuscript Studies*, 82.

<sup>97</sup> Sinai (Tamas) Turan, “Pirkei mavo le-toldot ha-pisuk ha-ivri,” *Tarbiz* 71, no. 3 (2002): 472-477.

The apostrophes that appear in Froben’s edition break the pericope into smaller syntactic units. In many cases, they appear prior to older implied forms of punctuation: conjunctions and disjunctions. However, they also indicate where quotations end and where new ideas begin, such as at the end of the biblical verses in section (a). Punctuation also helps emphasize particular statements, such as the rhetorical question, “If this is the case, why did Hathach not tell [the bad news] to Mordecai?” In the first edition, this question runs directly into the text that follows it. The use of an apostrophe in the second edition adds to the question’s rhetorical power, allowing it to stand on its own. By and large, the aggressive use of punctuation in the second edition of *Sefer Hasidim* functions this way: While not radically affecting the interpretation of pericopes, it helps readers—especially novice readers—parse the meaning of the text with greater precision.

Froben’s editors also eased comprehension of the pericope with the addition of key letters and words. In the first printed edition, the verb in the Aramaic expression, “We don’t learn/gain [anything] from it” (*lo nafka lan minah*) lacks its final *aleph*. The editors of the second edition correct this error. More tellingly, in the first edition, the circumstances under which a person may “testify on behalf of a man’s wife,” are left to be inferred by the reader. In the second edition, the editors add two Hebrew words—“Or to testify **about [a man’s] death** (*al ha-met*) on behalf of his wife, so that she might remarry and to make a remedy for the orphans”—clarifying that statement refers to the case of an *agunah*, a woman whose husband has disappeared and is prohibited from remarrying until his death has been affirmed in court.

Froben’s editors also add an additional word at the end of the pericope that clarifies that Esther knowingly gave herself over (sexually) to King Ahasuerus when she petitioned him to save the Jews of Persia. In the first edition, the last sentence of the pericope reads: “Now she pre-

sented herself to the foreskinned one (*le-arel*).” The second edition reads, “Now she presented herself to the foreskinned one **willingly** (*le-arel be-razon*).” Interestingly, by adding the word “willingly,” the editors of the second printed edition made the wording of the story accord with its source in the Babylonian Talmud.

Taken together, the addition of punctuation and the occasional choice word did not alter the meaning of the pericope, but did assist the reader’s comprehension. Especially, for the students to whom Luzzatto directed this edition, such innovations would have made the text more readable.

Another kind of textual change found in Froben’s edition was the addition of explanatory examples of implied or unclear phenomena. For example, §107 refers to the medieval custom of interrupting the reading of the Torah in the synagogue to have a grievance heard by the community’s leaders (*ikuv ha-keri’ah* or *bittul ha-tamid*):<sup>98</sup>

Anyone who prevents a Torah scroll from being inserted into the holy ark (*aron ha-kodesh*), **for instance the petitioner in the synagogue before the ark** (*lifnei ha-heikhal*), and thus wants to force and prod the congregation that they might do his bidding. The leaders [of the community] (*tovim*) say, “This is not legal what you are doing.” In the future, the Torah will cry out and announce about his soul, “This man, so-and-so, may not come to such-and-such a place in peace.”<sup>99</sup>

What distinguished Froben’s version of the pericope was the addition of the bolded phrase, “for instance the petitioner in the synagogue before the ark.”<sup>100</sup> Froben’s editors added this phrase to

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<sup>98</sup> On the practice of interrupting the Torah reading, see Louis Finkelstein, *Jewish Self-Government in the Middle Ages* (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1924) 15-18.

<sup>99</sup> This is the wording in Froben’s edition, with the added text in bold:

כל המונע ספר תורה מלהכניס לתוך ארון הקדש **כגון הקובל בב"ה לפני ההיכל** וכן הרוצ' להכריח ולדחוק את הקהל שיעשו חפצו והטובים או' שלא בדין אתה עושה עתידה תורה שתצעק ותכריז על נשמתו איש פלו' אל יבא למקום פלו' בשלו'.

<sup>100</sup> This is the wording of the pericope in the partners’ edition without the added phrase:

כל המונע ספר תורה מלהכניס לתוך ארון הקדש וכן הרוצ' להכריח ולדחוק את הקהל שיעשו חפצו והטובים או' שלא בדין אתה עושה עתידה תורה שתצעק ותכריז על נשמתו איש פלו' אל יבא למקום פלו' בשלו'.



clarify that the situation discussed was precisely that of *ikuv ha-keri'ah*, when an aggrieved person stood before the congregation in the synagogue and interrupted the service for his own benefit.

Some pericopes in the second printed edition also include explanatory glosses preceded by the Hebrew abbreviation for the word *perush*, meaning, “explanation.”<sup>101</sup> Often, these glosses clarify the meaning of a biblical or talmudic proof-text. Thus, §57 describes the gravity of the sin of humiliating someone publicly and equates it to murder.<sup>102</sup> The pericope concludes by adducing a tradition from the Palestinian Talmud: A “murderer who came to a city and [the people of the city] show him honors, must say ‘I am a murderer.’ As it says [in Scripture], ‘And this is the case (*davar*) of the murderer’ (Deuteronomy 19:4).”<sup>103</sup>

This talmudic text is a *midrash* on the meaning of the word *davar* in the biblical proof-text, which can be understood as “case,” as the JPS translation has it, or “word” or “speech.” While “case” may be a more appropriate reading in the original biblical context, the Talmud understands the word as “speech.” The murderer must make a speech admitting his guilt if he finds himself honored by the inhabitants of his new city.<sup>104</sup> *Sefer Hasidim* takes this *midrash* a step further, arguing that the biblical verse does not refer to a murderer *per se*, but to someone who has humiliated his fellow, a sin akin to murder. The connection between the verse and this con-

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<sup>102</sup> For the Talmudic *locus classicus* of this idea, see BT Bava Metzia 58b.

<sup>103</sup> רוצח שבא לעיר והיו מכבדין אותו צריך לומר רוצח אני שנאמר וזה דבר הרוצח  
The source of this tradition is PT Makkot 2:6. It is also found in the Babylonian Talmud, Makkot 12a. In my translation of the biblical verse, I deviate from the JPS for greater clarity. The JPS reads “manslayer” not “murderer.”

<sup>104</sup> Here is the Palestinian Talmud’s wording of this tradition:

רוצח שגלה לעיר מקלט ורצו אנשי העיר לכבדו יאמר להם רוצח אני אמרו לו אע"פ כן יקבל מהן שנאמר וזה דבר הרוצח:

clusion seems tenuous in the partners' rendering of the pericope. The reader has to intuit a connection between the biblical verse and conclusion the Talmud draws from it. To clarify this linkage, the second edition adds the following gloss at the end of the pericope: "Explanation: A speech (*dibbur*) that he will speak (*she-yidabber*) before them and he will confess to the murder."<sup>105</sup> The gloss explains that the word *davar* in the verse should be understood precisely as "speech" (*dibbur*), and not as "case," and that the verse is an injunction requiring the slanderer/murderer to confess (*yodeh*) his guilt publicly.

The presence of explanatory glosses like the one above along with punctuation throughout the second printed edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* demonstrates Froben's editors' intent to make the meaning and message of *Sefer Ḥasidim* more accessible to readers—especially readers who were less familiar with the mechanics of midrashic interpretation and the syntax of medieval Hebrew. Interestingly, the glosses in *Sefer Ḥasidim* differ from those found in the margins of Froben's Talmud edition, which some scholars have ascribed to Luzzatto.<sup>106</sup> The glosses there focus on the allegorical meaning of the *aggadot* in the Talmud and presage the essays Luzzatto compiled in *Kavvanot ha-Aggadot*. Here, in Froben's edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim*, the glosses help clarify the *peshat*, the literal meaning of the pericopes and ease the comprehension of the text. Such explanations would have made this edition more accessible and therefore more desirable to students unfamiliar with *Sefer Ḥasidim*'s idiom.

## Conclusion

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<sup>105</sup> פ' דבור שידבר בפניו ויודה הרציחה.

<sup>106</sup> Prijs, *Die basler hebräischen Drucke*, 178.

The years between the printing of the partners' edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* in 1538 and Froben's edition in 1581 witnessed dramatic events in the history of the Hebrew book. In the Autumn of 1553, the Roman Inquisition, directed by Cardinal Gian Pietro Carafa (later Pope Paul IV), confiscated and burned all the copies of the Talmud in the city in the Campo de' Fiori. Other cities of the Papal States followed suit in the following months, and as late as 1559, the Talmud was burned in the northern Italian city of Cremona.<sup>107</sup> In 1554, Pope Julius III promulgated the bull *Cum sicut nuper*, formally initiating a policy of censorship (prior to publication) and expurgation (following publication) of Hebrew books.<sup>108</sup> In the following decades, the Church developed a network of knowledgeable censors—many of whom converts from Judaism—who vetted and authorized Hebrew books before and after printing. At the same time, new Hebrew presses were established in northern Italy, central Europe and Poland, as well as in Constantinople and Salonica. Some, especially those in Germany, sought to produce Hebrew books for Christian readers. Indeed, the emergence of a market for Hebrew books among *both* Protestants and Catholics was a consequence of a Reformation-era interest in uncovering the *Hebraica veritas* (the root meaning of Scripture in its Hebrew original).<sup>109</sup>

In some ways, the second printed edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* is vivid testimony to the above events. On the one hand, the obvious fact that it was produced in the city of Basel by a Christian printer is emblematic of the expansion of Hebrew printing northward from the Italian peninsula

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<sup>107</sup> Kenneth R. Stow, "The Burning of the Talmud in 1553, in Light of Sixteenth-Century Catholic Attitudes Toward the Talmud," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 34, no. 3 (1972): 435–59.

<sup>108</sup> Piet van Boxel, "Hebrew Books and Censorship in Sixteenth Century Italy," in *Jewish Books and Their Readers Aspects of the Intellectual Life of Christians and Jews in Early Modern Europe*, (Lieden: Brill, 2016) 75–99.

<sup>109</sup> Stephen G. Burnett, "Christian Hebrew Printing in the Sixteenth Century: Printers, Humanism and the Impact of the Reformation," *Helmantica: Revista de Filología Clásica y Hebrea* 51, no. 154 (Winter 2000): 13–42.

and the growing interest of Christians in Hebrew and Jewish literature. Froben's print shop produced books for both Jews and Christian Hebraists, though *Sefer Ḥasidim* was intended for Jews. These readers, Froben and his team hoped, were students interested in developing a deeper knowledge of the long-neglected aggadic tradition of which *Sefer Ḥasidim* was a part. The editorial decisions that Froben and his team made, from its two introductions to the emendations in the text, were meant to make the *aggadah* *Sefer Ḥasidim* contained more accessible, just as Luzatto hoped *Kavvanot ha-Aggadot* would do.

At the same time, we might assume that following the Talmud burnings and the promulgation of *Cum sicut nuper*, as well as the disastrous fate of Froben's Talmud edition, that the censorship in his *Sefer Ḥasidim* edition would have been more extensive and meticulous. What we find are certainly more aggressive forms of censorship than those we observed in the first printed edition: the replacement of perceived anti-Christian words and phrases with anachronisms; the universalizing of passages that hitherto referred only to Christians; and the elimination of complete sentences without leaving any trace of their existence. However, Froben's editors carried out this process in the same haphazard manner as the partners of Bologna—many objectionable words and phrases remained. This haphazardness was, as we observed earlier, of course, a hallmark of early modern censorship. The text of *Sefer Ḥasidim* was not mechanically scoured and every offending word highlighted and expunged—as might be possible today using digital technologies. Rather, its preparers read it carefully, but not scrupulously, and selectively adapted or emended its contents.

Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin has argued that the censorship of Hebrew books of the late-sixteenth century was marked by a creative interplay of Jewish and Christian print shop workers in

which Jewish texts were rewritten to eliminate polemical elements and make them fit within the “limits of discourse” defined by the Church. The overall effect, he argues, was more beneficial than deleterious, for the softening of longstanding polemics was a prelude to the “secularization” and “modernization” of Jewish culture.<sup>110</sup> Piet van Boxel has rejected this view, however, arguing that neither the Church nor its censors “had the intention of reformulating the censored passages or of conveying new knowledge.”<sup>111</sup> Moreover, Boxel has argued, these efforts only extended as far as eliminating the “presence of inadmissible vocabulary” and generally left texts mangled and readers aware of lacunae.<sup>112</sup> Censorship was not one step in a larger editorial process and editors and censors performed very different tasks: Censors were intent on removing of any and all offending passages without regard for syntax, style or content.<sup>113</sup>

The investigations in this chapter indicate that Boxel is certainly correct in rejecting Raz-Krakovitzkin’s Whiggish characterization of the censorship of Hebrew books. From the case of *Sefer Hasidim*, it is clear that censorship was more aggressive in the late-sixteenth century and that the meaning of texts were changed when polemics were eliminated; sometimes a reader could intuit the original reading and sometimes new meanings were created at variance with the original. These emendations reflect Christian society imposing its will upon Jews and Judaism, forcing Jews to accept their interpretation of Hebrew texts as anti-Christian and constraining the knowledge Jews might derive from them. This sort of coercion does not signal the “seculariza-

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<sup>110</sup> Raz-Krakovitzkin, *The Censor, the Editor, and the Text*, 180-194

<sup>111</sup> Piet van Boxel, “Hebrew Books and Censorship in Sixteenth Century Italy” in *Jewish Books and Their Readers Aspects of the Intellectual Life of Christians and Jews in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2016) 90.

<sup>112</sup> Boxel, “Hebrew Books and Censorship,” 85.

<sup>113</sup> Boxel, “Hebrew Books and Censorship,” 80.

tion” or “modernization” of Jewish society but rather the increased surveillance of Jewish society that went hand-in-hand with the ghettoization of early modern Jewry.

At the same time, the censorship of *Sefer Ḥasidim* was part of a larger editorial process. Froben’s edition contained no censors’ mark. Luzzatto, in his introductions, elided the difference between *haggahah* (correction) and *zikkuk* (expurgation). The text was likely censored at the same time as it was prepared, by the same individuals who composed the title page and glosses, as well as made the other emendations. In this way, *Sefer Ḥasidim* differed from the subjects of Boxel’s study, the rabbinic Bibles, which were censored by Church officials prior to their printing. This was not the case in Froben’s *Sefer Ḥasidim*. In this new edition, the removal of perceived anti-Christian invective was undertaken by internal actors responding to the concerns of the Church, not external actors imposing the Church’s will on a text. Christian readers were but one constituency who had a stake in the content of the book, however. Beyond the Church, Froben’s team had other readers to consider, and so they intervened in the text to make their edition superior to its predecessor. Indeed, the removal of anti-Christian phrases and vernacular phrases were remarkably similar processes carried out for different reasons. The text was re-assembled leaving no trace of what existed previously.

## Conclusion

The central claim of this dissertation is that printing was neither the mechanical reproduction of manuscripts nor the invention of texts out of whole cloth in the print shop. It was a process of adaptation and manipulation, a creative act rooted in time and place—in this case, the sixteenth century and Italian Jewish culture. The editorial decisions undertaken by *Sefer Ḥasidim*'s first two printers and their associates reveal this process. Moreover, the texts and paratexts contained in these editions testify to the fact that each team of printers conceived of *Sefer Ḥasidim* differently and as such, presented *Sefer Ḥasidim* to readers differently.

R. Abraham b. Moses ha-Cohen, working with the partners of Bologna, presented *Sefer Ḥasidim* as a religious and ethical guidebook, meant to inspire piety at a time of religious apathy and philosophical speculation. On the other hand, R. Jacob Luzzatto, working at Ambrosius Froben's print shop, depicted *Sefer Ḥasidim* as a long-lost work of *aggadah*, a religious classic, meant to engage a new generation of Jewish students and expand the Jewish educational curriculum. Both editions emerged in a cultural context where Jewish scholars actively debated the legitimacy of Aristotelian philosophy. Both printers positioned *Sefer Ḥasidim* as an indigenously Jewish alternative to the literature of philosophical speculation.

At the same time, forty eventful years spanned the appearance of these editions, forty years of technical advancement in the print shop and forty years of transformation in Jewish culture and in Jewish-Christian relations. The first two printed editions of *Sefer Ḥasidim* are reflective of their specific local, institutional, religious, cultural and commercial contexts. By reading the texts and paratexts of these editions closely and comparatively, it is possible to discern the

effects printing had on *Sefer Ḥasidim* under specific circumstances, effects that may be generalized to other Hebrew titles.

One major focus of this dissertation has been pre-publication censorship, the alteration of the text of *Sefer Ḥasidim* in the print shop in response to Christian sensibilities and sensitivities. In the preceding chapters, we have observed how the two teams of printers approached this problem differently. In the early-sixteenth century, the partners of Bologna were aware that words and phrases in their exemplar had the potential to offend Christian readers and made modifications accordingly. In some, though not all, of these cases, it was possible for readers to intuit the former meaning in altered pericopes. Following the burning of the Talmud, and in a Christian-owned print shop, the editors of Froben's edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* made more aggressive modifications to the text, modifications that had a significant impact on the text's meaning—universalizing statements about Christians, eliminating references to Christian dogma and traditions. While much recent research on Hebrew censorship has focused on actions imposed by the Church and regional sovereigns after 1553, it is clear that the censorship of printed Hebrew books began well before the events of 1553, and even before the Council of Trent, and that these actions were undertaken by Jews themselves, not the Church or the state.

Writing about censorship in Tudor-Stuart England, Debora Shuger has argued that English censorship law emerged not from a desire to prevent “the expression of dangerous ideas” but rather to prevent injury to the “dignity and integrity of the self.” It developed from the Roman legal concept of *iniuria*, which also governed offenses such as assault, harassment and libel.<sup>1</sup> During the sixteenth century, Christian sovereigns on the Continent—concerned about printing's

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<sup>1</sup> Debora Shuger, *Censorship and Cultural Sensibility: The Regulation of Language in Tudor-Stuart England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013) 8-9, 56-77.



power to disseminate information (and misinformation) widely—enacted censorship policies to control the spread of problematic ideas.<sup>2</sup> Interestingly, the kind of censorship observed in the partners’ edition appears to proceed from a similar assumption to those that undergirded Tudor-Stuart and Roman censorship: The partners eliminated words that were injurious to Christians, as well as Christian ideas and institutions. They replaced such words and phrases with neutral alternatives. In Froben’s edition, following the burning of the Talmud, we witness several instances of something different: a greater awareness of ideas that directly contradicted Christian dogma and willingness to control the spread of those ideas by modifying modifying the text of *Sefer Ḥasidim* accordingly.

In 1938, Fritz Baer famously argued that *Sefer Ḥasidim* emerged from a twelfth-century Judaism suffused with the “influence” of medieval Christian monasticism and asceticism. The *Ḥasidei Ashkenaz* was a widespread “popular movement” dedicated to the adoption of Judaized versions of ideas and practices that originated among Christian monastics.<sup>3</sup> Over and against this view, more recently, Haym Soloveitchik has argued the *Ḥasidei Ashkenaz* was a small faction whose “idiosyncratic” ideas and practices were a religious response to the influential tosafist movement, a school of Talmudic scholarship that emphasized the dialectical analysis of *halakhah*. According to Haym Soloveitchik, the *Ḥasidei Ashkenaz* attempted to reassert older

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<sup>2</sup> Indeed, Pope Leo X’s bull *Inter sollicitudines*—the first ecclesiastical censorship regulation—emphasized this when it stated, “In fact, some printers have the boldness to print and sell to the public, in different parts of the world, books...containing errors opposed to the faith as well as pernicious views contrary to the christian religion.... Indeed, they lapse into very great errors not only in the realm of faith but also in that of life and morals. This has often given rise to various scandals, as experience has taught, and there is daily the fear that even greater scandals are developing,” Nelson H. Minnich, “The Fifth Lateran Council and Preventive Censorship of Printed Books,” *Annali della scuola normale superiore di Pisa classe di lettere e filosofia* 2, no. 1 (2010): 67–104; Jean-François Gilmont, “Introduction” in *The Reformation and the Book*, trans. Karin Maag (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998).

<sup>3</sup> Yitzhak Baer, “Ha’megamah ha’dait-ha’hevratit shel Sefer Ḥasidim,” *Zion* 3 (1938): 1–50.

modes of Jewish creativity—such as liturgical poetry, scriptural exegesis and aggadic exegesis—that had been rejected by the upstart “tosafist elite,” but were not widely successful.<sup>4</sup> At the heart of this disagreement are competing ways of understanding causation in Jewish cultural history: one perspective seeks sources of change external to Judaism and Jewish society; while the other seeks out sources intrinsic to Judaism and Jewish society.

While the printers of the first two editions of *Sefer Ḥasidim* certainly removed varying amounts of perceived anti-Christian rhetoric from the text, this was only one kind of intervention among many. Against Baer, Soloveitchik has taught us that Christian influence may have been only a minor factor in the emergence of the *Ḥasidei Ashkenaz* and *Sefer Ḥasidim*. Similarly, printers’ awareness of perceived hostility to Christianity within *Sefer Ḥasidim* was only one facet of the text among many they responded to during the printing process. Indeed, *Sefer Ḥasidim*’s printers—both those in Bologna and Basel—left the vast majority of pericopes unchanged. Focusing on censorship exclusively when describing the effect of printing on Hebrew books in the sixteenth century, as Raz-Krakotzkin has, skews our understanding of the many creative acts involved in Hebrew printing and skews our understanding of the texts themselves. In point of fact, anti-Christian polemic was one relatively minor feature of Hebrew literature which assumed great importance in the eyes of Christian readers and censors. There was much more to printed Hebrew texts and by extension, Jewish culture, than the presence or deliberate absence of polemical content, as this dissertation has shown.

Similarly, following Soloveitchik, it is also clear that the printers of both *Sefer Ḥasidim* editions sought to respond to specific needs and realities within sixteenth-century Jewish society.

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<sup>4</sup> Haym Soloveitchik, “Three Themes in *Sefer Ḥasidim*,” *AJS Review* 1 (1976): 311-357.

In Bologna, the partners believed their edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* was a guide for ethical and pious living. In R. Abraham b. Moses ha-Cohen's words, "It is always incumbent upon us to appoint elders and upright people...to merit and purify and sanctify the masses, to teach them and instruct them in the way and manner whereby one praises and acclaims His Name."<sup>5</sup> *Sefer Ḥasidim*, in its new printed form, was intended to perform the work that, in a previous generation, was done by figures like R. Judah he-Ḥasid himself.

Forty years later, in Basel, Froben and his team argued that the second printed edition of *Sefer Ḥasidim* heralded the rediscovery and renewed appreciation for an ancient Hebrew classic, a long-neglected canonical text and source of religious and spiritual authority. As R. Jacob Luzzatto wrote, *Sefer Ḥasidim* was "a very ancient book" (*sefer yashan noshan*) akin to the "tablets and fragments of tablets" stored in the Ark of Covenant.<sup>6</sup> By describing *Sefer Ḥasidim* in this way, Luzzatto—like the *Ḥasidei Ashkenaz* before him, or like R. Jacob ibn Ḥabib in his own day—sought to expand the Jewish core-curriculum beyond the four ells of *halakhah* into the long-neglected realm of *aggadah*. This was even more evident in the table of contents which highlighted *ma'asim* (tales) at the expense of other genres of pericopes in the text.

These two printed editions were responses to very specific localized Jewish concerns, however, it would be wrong to dismiss Baer's line of argument completely and ignore parallels between the printed editions of *Sefer Ḥasidim* and their Christian contexts. This is especially relevant with regard to the second printed edition and Luzzatto's introductions. Luzzatto's characterization of *Sefer Ḥasidim* as a neglected "very ancient book" and his efforts to revive interest in

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<sup>5</sup> For the full quotation from Abraham's introduction to the first printed edition, and the original Hebrew, see Chapter 2, note 27.

<sup>6</sup> For the full quotation from Luzzatto's introduction to the second printed edition, see chapter 4.

it are reminiscent of Renaissance humanists' work to seek out and uncover the long-lost texts and traditions of antiquity. Historiography on the "revival of antiquity," as Jacob Burckhardt called it, among Renaissance humanists is legion.<sup>7</sup> Most relevant, perhaps, are recent discussions of the production of sophisticated forgeries of ancient texts in the early modern period. By applying the developing techniques of Renaissance philology, scholars, such as Annaius of Viterbo, bestowed the halo of canonicity and authority on newly-composed works.<sup>8</sup> Jews engaged in similar activities. Daniel Abrams has shown how the *Zohar*, in its well-known form as the core text of *kabbalah*, was assembled in early modern print shops yet purported to be of a late-antique vintage.<sup>9</sup> The sixteenth-century Venetian rabbi Leon Modena—known for, among other achievements, unmasking the *Zohar* as of more recent origin—likely composed *Kol Sakhal*, a pseudepigraphic critique of rabbinic authority.<sup>10</sup> Some Jewish scholars even mined the Hermetic corpus—the body of texts attributed to the legendary Greco-Roman figure Hermes Trismegistus and subsequently unmasked as early modern pseudepigrapha—as a source of esoteric, late-antique wisdom.<sup>11</sup> Beyond these examples, we have already noted how Luzzatto's characterization of *Sefer*

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<sup>7</sup> Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, trans. S. G. C. Middlemore (London: Penguin, 2004) 120-184; more recently, Roberto Weiss, *The Renaissance Discovery of Classical Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

<sup>8</sup> Anthony Grafton, *Forgers and Critics: Creativity and Duplicity in Western Scholarship* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990) 76-103; Joanna Weinberg, "Azarah de' Rossi and the Forgeries of Annaius of Viterbo" in *Essential Papers on Jewish Culture in Renaissance and Baroque Italy*, ed. David B. Ruderman (New York: New York University Press, 1992) 252-79.

<sup>9</sup> Daniel Abrams, *Kabbalistic Manuscripts and Textual Theory: Methodologies of Textual Scholarship and Editorial Practice in the Study of Jewish Mysticism* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2010).

<sup>10</sup> Talya Fishman, *Shaking the Pillars of Exile: "Voice of a Fool," an Early Modern Jewish Critique of Rabbinic Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997); Yaacob Dweck, *The Scandal of Kabbalah: Leon Modena, Jewish Mysticism, Early Modern Venice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).

<sup>11</sup> Fabrizio Lelli, "Hermes Among the Jews: *Hermetica* as *Hebraica* from Antiquity to the Renaissance," *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 2, no. 2 (January 2007): 129-134. On the unmasking of these texts, see Anthony Grafton, *Defenders of the Text: The Traditions of Scholarship in an Age of Science, 1450-1800* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991) 145-161.

*Ḥasidim* as a canonical text parallels the larger revival of interest in Tanaitic works—especially the Mishnah—which had long been ignored by Ashkenazic scholars.<sup>12</sup>

While in his more grandiose moments, Baer may have identified the decisive “influence” of medieval Christianity on the production of *Sefer Ḥasidim*, he also wrote more modestly that *Sefer Ḥasidim* emerged from “dynamic contact” with Christianity. We might adopt the latter characterization to describe a later phase of *Sefer Ḥasidim*’s history, its transmission in print, especially in its second edition. This edition, and Luzzatto’s depiction of it as a long-neglected work of Jewish antiquity, can be considered part and parcel of a broader early modern Jewish turn to antiquity and testifies to Jewish intellectuals’ embeddedness in early modern culture writ large. This is in keeping with more recent trends in the study of *Sefer Ḥasidim* and medieval Ashkenaz, as scholars have been increasingly more willing to admit close cultural and ideological proximity of medieval Jewry and its Christian neighbors.<sup>13</sup> Printing, as a creative process of adaptation and manipulation, imposed these specific cultural concerns on sacred texts and in that way made the “very ancient” new again.

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<sup>12</sup> See chapter 5.

<sup>13</sup> Elisheva Baumgarten, *Mothers and Children: Jewish Family Life in Medieval Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); Israel Jacob Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb: Perceptions of Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, trans. Barbara Harshav (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Jonathan Elukin, *Living Together, Living Apart Rethinking Jewish-Christian Relations in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); Elisheva Baumgarten, *Practicing Piety in Medieval Ashkenaz: Men, Women, and Everyday Religious Observance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014); and most recently, David I. Shyovitz, “‘He Has Created a Remembrance of His Wonders’: Nature and Embodiment in the Thought of the *Ḥasidei Ashkenaz*,” (Ph.D. diss, University of Pennsylvania, 2011).

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## **Appendices**



## Appendix A

### Titles Printed by the Partners of Bologna

1. *Or amim*, Sforno (1536-1537 [5297])
2. *Siddur* (Tuesday [5 Sivan 5297], 1537 i.e. Spring/Summer)
3. *Perush hamesh megillot*, Joseph b. David ibn Yahya (1537-1538 [5298])
4. *Sefer He'Hasidim* (1538 [5298])
5. *Piske halakhot m'ha'mekubal*, Menachem Recanati (1537-1538 [5298])
6. *Torah or*, Joseph b. David ibn Yahya (1537-1538 [5298])
7. *Tefillot latini* (1538 [Tishrei 5299])
8. *Teshuvot She'elot me-ha-Eshel ha-Gadol*, Rashba (1538-1539 [5299])
9. *Maḥzor k'fi minhag kehillat kodesh Roma*, R. Yohanan b. Joseph Treves (aka *Kamḥa davishuna*, 1540 [Erev Sukkot 5301])

## Appendix B

### The First Printed Edition's (1538) Introduction

יתברך ויתעלה הגומל חסדים לתת לעמו ישראל שרידים. וקראם בכל דור ודור להוכיח ולישר לעושה רשעה גם זדים. ולישר ולהדריך חטאים כמשפט תחת היותם לעשות עולה מועדים. ותמיד לנו הקים צדיקים וישר' יגינו על דורם ויהיו לפניו כמלאכיו חביבים וידידים. לזכות ולטהר ולקדש לרבים ללמדם ולהורותם דרך ואופן היות שמו מקלסים ומיחדים. ולשם קדשו אשר בו ברא עליונים ותחתונים מהללים ומשבחים ומודים. ותושבחותיו ופאר עיזונו ונפלאותיו לבריותיו מגידים. ונוראותיו מספרים וממללים בלשון חסידים. ואף גם זאת לא עזב חסדו ואמתו עם יראיו גבורי כח משרתיו עושה דברו אשר בדורם יחידים ומיוחדים. להקים עליהם אנשים חכמים ונבונים וידועים אשר על חכמתם בחסדו הוסיף להם חכמה ובינה וחנוּם רוח דעת ויראת ה' לחבר ספרים להוסיף קדושה על קדושתם ובטהרתם מתמידים. כאשר עשה האדיר הקדוש רבינו יהודה החסיד אשר ברוב חסדים איזן וחקר תקן ספר מופלא אשר שם שמו בארץ

ספר החסידים

ולמען הבין תועלות הספר הזה ופרותיו כשולחן ערוך ומוכן לפני כל מבקש ה' ויראתו תקנתי אני הצעיר הדל באלפי החתום בסיום הספר לפתוח פתח ושער במפתחות ולספר הנורא הזה בו יבואו כל יראי ה' וחושבי שמו וימצאו בקלות כל מעדני מלך מלכו של עולם אשר בו וזה החלי להנשא שערים ראשיהם ולמצוא פתחי עולם שכלו ארוך ושכלו טוב.

May the Merciful One be blessed and exalted, to give [mercy] to his people Israel, the remnants (Jeremiah 31:1). He called them in every generation to rebuke and chastise those who do evil, also the wicked. To straighten out and direct sinners (*hata'im*) in the law (*b'mishpat*) in place of their making the festival burnt offerings (*olah mo'adim*). Always He established for us righteous and upright people (*zaddik im va-yasharim*) who will defend their generations and will be before Him like his angels, beloved and precious. To make worthy, to purify and to sanctify the public, to teach them and instruct them in the path and manner of being those who praise and unite His Name, to His holy Name which created the angels and human beings [lit. upper and lower beings] who praise, exalt and acknowledge [Him]. His praises and adulation, they magnified, and His wondrous deeds they recount to his creations. His awesome deeds they tell and praised with the tongue of the pious. And furthermore, His mercy (*hasdo*) and His truth did not depart from His faithful, mighty ones, His servants, those who do His bidding, who are singular and special in their generations. To establish for them men—sages, [men of] understanding (*nevonim*) who are known for their wisdom—in His mercy, to augment their wisdom (*hokhmah*) and understanding (*binah*), to grace them with the spirit of knowledge (*ru'ah ha-da'at*) and fear of the Lord, to compose books to augment their already considerable holiness and their purity always. Just as the mighty, holy, our rabbi, Judah the Pious did, who is the greatest of the pious ones. He weighed, investigated and established (*tikken*) this wondrous book, which put its name on the earth (Psalms 46:9):

The Book of the Pious.

For the sake of understanding the profit of this book and its fruits like a set table (*shulhan arukh*) prepared before all who seek the Lord and His fear, I, the insignificant, the poorest among the greats who signed [their names] at the conclusion of this book, decreed to open a doorway and a gate with a table of contents (lit. keys, *maftehot*). To this awesome book all who fear the Lord and contemplate His name will come and they will find easily all the pleasures of the King (Genesis 49:20), King of the universe, which are in it. With this I begin to cause the gates to lift their heads and to find the eternal doorways (an allusion to Psalms 24:7), since its intelligence is broad and all of it is good.

## Appendix C

### The Second Printed Edition's (1581) First Introduction

הקדמה במהלל הספר והמחבר זצל

מאן דבעי למהוי חסידא. ליעיין במילי דרבינו יהודא חסידא. הגדיל לעשות ברב חסדיו איזן וחקר ותקן זה הספר הנפלא קדוש ונורא מאד אשר שם כל מחשך לפנינו לאור ויפתח לנו שערי צדק אל הדרך אשר יעלה בה איש ואיש להתרחק מכל הצר הצורר ולקרבה אל ההצלחה ככל אות נפשנו וקראו ספר חסידים. לעם ה' השרידים. ושמו מורה על עצמותו ומהותו ופעולתו. כשמו כן תהלתו. בו כלל עקר המצות וענפיהם וענפי ענפיהם בפשטים נעימים ונכבדים. עם כל פרי מגדים. ודברי מוסר ותוכחה לרבים ויחידים. עם מעשים נוראים ונפלאים שארעו בימי החסידים:

ולפי מה שראיתי עתה רבו כמו רבו ישוטטו יבקשוהו להיותם נמנים בכת הכשרים החסידים. להיותם מהלכים בין העומדים. כדי להוסיף קדושה על קדושתם והדרכים הלמודים. ללמד לתלמידים. וחסר הוא מספר חסידים. כי לא נמצאו רק בין היחידים. אחד מעיר ושתיים ממשפחה. ואלו אינם מזוקקים כראוי ומוגהים כהלכה. ע"כ נתתי את נפשי בכפי על המלאכה. לתור ולבקש ולחקור אחר ספר הישר. ויגעתי ומצאתי אמרי יושר. כתוב באצבע אלהי דברי כושר. מזוקק ומצורף ומוגה ומאושר אלה פסל הראשונים. ובא זה מאבד את זה. וכבר ידוע מאמר רבי יוסי בפ"ב דכתובות אל תשכן באהליך עולה. זה השווה תוך ביתו ספר שאינו מוגה. על כן טוב אשר תאחז בזה. וכל הקורא בו בתמידים. בזה הספר חסידים. יזכה לישב במעלת הצדיקים וחסידים.

Introduction in praise of the book and its author of blessed memory

One who wants to be pious should seek in the words of our Rabbi Judah the Pious.<sup>1</sup> To surpass himself in his great piety, he weighed and investigated and established (*tikken*)<sup>2</sup> this marvelous, holy and very awesome book which puts everyone in darkness before us into light; and will open for us the gates of justice (*zedek*) [leading] to the path by which everybody will ascend on it: To distance himself from every foe that closes in on him and to bring him close to success in all his heart desires. It is called *Sefer Hasidim*: For the people of the Lord, the remnants (Jeremiah 31:1).<sup>3</sup> Its name teaches about its identity, character and effect. As its name is, thus is its praise.<sup>4</sup> In it, it includes the root of the commandments and their branches and the branches of their branches in literal interpretations (*peshatim*), pleasant and honorable, with every luscious fruit (Song of Songs 4:13), and ethical teachings and rebuke for the collective and the individual. With awe-inspiring and marvelous tales that happened in the days of the pious ones.

<sup>1</sup> This is a modification on a *baraita* from BT Bava Kama 30a, which states: "R. Judah said, 'One who wants to be pious will fulfill the words of damages [i.e. the tractate concerning damages].'" The R. Judah in this *baraita* is a Babylonian *amora*. Nonetheless, the fact that the author of this famous aphorism and R. Judah he-Hasid shared the same name would have been apparent to some readers.

<sup>2</sup> The last clauses are borrowed from the introduction to the first edition.

<sup>3</sup> See the discussion of this phrase on the title page, above.

<sup>4</sup> This phrase is based on Rashi's commentary on 1 Chronicles 16:29, and more generally on 1 Samuel 25:25.

They have increased (Zachariah 10:8) they wander around seeking it, to be counted in the faction of the fit (*be-kat ha-kesharim*), the pious; to be the ones who walk among those who stand (i.e. the ministering angels) (Zachariah 3:7)<sup>5</sup>; in order to add holiness to their holiness and the ways of study, to instruct the students (*talmidim*). Deficient is the number of the pious (or, in a play on the words *mispar* and *mi-sefer*, “they are lacking *Sefer Ḥasidim*”) for they (i.e. the pious/the book) are found only among the elite—few and far between (Jeremiah 3:14). And further, these are not expurgated appropriately and corrected properly. Therefore, devoted I devoted myself with my hands to the work, to scout, seek out and investigate after the book of uprightness (*sefer ha-yashar*). And I arrived at and found sayings of uprightness (*imrei yosher*), written with a Godly finger (Exodus 31:18, Deuteronomy 9:10), words of fitness (*divrei kosher*); expurgated, refined, corrected and approved (*mezukkak, meṣuraf, mugah u-me’ushar*), this one canceling out all earlier editions (Genesis Rabbah 12:13). This one comes to displace that one. Rabbi Yosi’s statement is already well known, from the second chapter of [Babylonian Talmud, tractate] Ketubot, [regarding the biblical verse], “Do not let injustice reside in your tent” (Job 11:14): “This refers to a person who retains an uncorrected book (*sefer she-eino mugah*) in his house.”

Therefore, it is good that a person who grasps this [book], and all who read in it regularly—in this the book of the pious (*Sefer Ḥasidim*)—he will be worthy of dwelling at the heights of the just and pious ones.

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<sup>5</sup> See my discussion of this phrase and its use on the title page above.

## Appendix D

### The Second Printed Edition's (1581) Second Introduction

#### הקדמה לספר חסידים

יתברך ויתעלה הגומל חסידים. לתת לעמו ישראל השרידים. וקראם בכל דור ודור להוכיח וליסר לעושי רשעה גם זדים. ולישר ולהדריך חטאים במשפט תחת היותם לעשות עולה מועדים. ותמיד הקים לנו צדיקים וישרים יגינו על דורם ויהיו לפנינו כמלאכיו חביבים וידידים.

לזכות ולטהור ולקדש לרבים ללמדם ולהורותם דרך ואופן היות שמו מקלסים ומיחדים. ולשם קדשו אשר ברא עליונים ותחתונים מהללים ומשבחים ומודים. ותשבחותיו ופאר עיזו ונפלאותיו לבריותיו מגידים. ונוראותיו מספרים ומהללים בלשון חסידים. ואף גם זאת לא עזב חסדו ואמתו עם יראיו גבורי כח משרתיו עושי דברו אשר בדורם יחידים ומיוחדים. להקים עליהם אנשים חכמים ונבונים וידועים אשר על חכמתם בחסדו הוסיף להם חכמה ובינה וחננם רוח דעת ויראת ה' לחבר ספרים להוסיף קדושה על קדושתם ובטהרתם מתמידים. כאשר עשה האדיר הקדוש רבינו יהודה החסיד אשר ברב חסידים. איזן וחיקר ותקן ספר מופלא אשר שם שמו בארץ ספר חסידים:

ועלינו לשבח לאלהי ישראל אשר בגדל חסדו ורב טובו ממכון שבתו השגיה ויבחר בבית יעקב לשכון כבוד בתוכם לאהב' וליראה אותו לעבדו ולדבקה בו אשר הוא תכלית ההשגחה האנושית אשר נבוכו בה רבים ובחשכה יתהלכו מהחכמים בעיניהם ונגד פניהם נבונים והכין לנו את הדרך דרך החיים אשר בלעדיהם רחוק רחוק מי ימצאנו אם לא זרח על פניו האור האמתי הוא אור זיו השכינ' הוא הצור אשר ממנו חוצבנו אבן בוחן אבן השתיה אשר ממנו הושתת העולם והוא אברהם אבינו ע"ה אשר בן ג' שנים הכיר את בוראו ויום עמד על דעתו קרא רבים אתו לעבודתו ית'. גם אחריו צוה לבניו ישמרו דרך ה' ותורותיו דכתיב כי ידעתי למען אשר יצוה את בניו ואת אחריו ושמרו דרך ה' וכו'. וכדכתיב בשלמ' ע"ה דע את אלהי אביך ועבדהו. וכן דור אחר דור יחזיקו האבות על הבנים ויזהירו הגדולי' על הקטני' לשמור תורת ה' וחוקותיו ומצותיו בגדרותיו וגזירותיו ותקנותיו והרב לתלמידיו היו מוסרי' כללי' קצרי' על פה בסימנים ידועים וכאמר' שימה בפיהם כו'. וכאשר גברו הצרות עלינו והרבו הגליות ותכפו השכחות ורבו המחלוקות והדיעות בין התלמידים שלא שמשו כל צרכן והיו קצתם מתירין לעצמן לכתוב בספר מה שהיו מקבלין מפי רבותיה' וקורין להן מגילת סדרים. וקצתן מגלת סתרים. הן ממה שקבלו מן טעמי המצוות או פשטים נעימים ודרשות ומוסרי' ומדות טובות וישרות ודרך ארץ הכל כתבו במגלה לספר זכרונות ועל זה הדרך סובב קוטב ספר חסידים כולל אלו העניינים וזה הטעם ימצאו בהן לשונות מגומגמות ונפתלי' ועקשות. ולפעמים מוסרים כפולות ומכופלות. וחלופות פי כל עמית שבא לידם ויצאיהו לפי שעה. והנה שכרנו אתנו ופעולתינו לפני האלהים באשר משפטי הספורים והקורות הנשמעים בה נקח עצה ומוסר על כל הנדרש אלינו ומלי דעלמא וגופי דעובדא לדרוש אליהן בשום שכל וטוב טעם. אמנם מה שהוסיף האדיר החסיד המחבר ז"ל הם אמרות טהורות וצרופות. ואין להרחיק מעט הנזק אשר חלו בה ידי הבטל במיעוטו לרוב התועלת שבו בפנינו אמריו והחדות החשובות והדרשות הטובים עם העתקת חדושי רבינו נסים גאון. ורבינו יצחק האלפסי והעתקה ממגילת סתרים. ומה גם עתה שזיכנו השם יתברך והאיר עינינו למצא ספר ישן נושן כתוב ומוגה מכל הטעויות אשר כל עין רואה לוחות. ושברי לוחות. לפנינו מונחות. יחד כאחת. יראה באור השכל ההפרש ביניהן כיתרון האור על החושך. שאין האור נכר אלא מתוך החושך:

ולפי שלא היו בזה הספר המופלא נמצעי' הציונים. לא רצינו לשנות טעמו לפוגמו בסימנים. אשר גבלו הראשונים. מלאים בטעויות כמו פניהן חרולים ועלו בהן קמשונים. וגם ראינו שאין תועלת להאריך בספר בהן ואמרו לעולם ילמד דרך קצרה ואדרבה יתר הנזק מהתועלת. כי אולי יסמכו על הסימנים שהם כללים קצרים המורים על שורש הספר ולא יבוא לעולם לידיעת שורש העניין. ובתוך זמן שיבקש בסימנים יוכל לבוא למקור הספר עצמו. ועוד שבתוך כך שיחפש

חיפוש אחר חיפוש בתוך הספר יעברו חידושים רבים על פניו כי אין בית אשר אין שם מת"חדש. ועוד שכל אדם ירגיל עצמו ואת בני ביתו לקרות בכל יום חלק אחד ויוצא בו ידי חובת חי' אדם לשלש שנותיו כו' כי מנא דכולא ביה הפוך בה והפיך בה דכולא בה: על כן בחרנו דרך ארוכה וקצרה לעשות סימנים כוללים להדינים היוצאין והמעשים: ושאר החידושים הנחנו לרוב אריכתם וכדי לקרות כלם בכל יום חלק אחד כנזכר. ובכל אופן שנוציא המרגלית מן החול אין רע ואין מחריד כמאמר המורה בהקדמתו: והקורא בו בכל יום מובטח שהו' בן עולם הבא ויזכה לחזות בנועם ה' לבקר בהיכלו. וכבודו אומר כלו. וכתוב עליך יזרח ה' וכבודו עליך יראה והיה ה' לך לאור עולם אכי"ר

למען הבין תועלות הספר הזה ופרותיו כשולחן ערוך ומוכן לפני כל מבקש ה' ויראתו תקנתי רמזים וכללים קצרים לפתוח פתח ושער במפתחו וימצאו בנקך כל כל מעדני מלך מלכו של עולם. וזה החלי להנשא שערים ראשיהם ולמצא פתחי עולם שכלו ארוך וכלו טוב:

### Introduction to *Sefer Hasidim*

May the Merciful One be blessed and exalted, to give [mercy] to his people Israel, the remnants (Jeremiah 31:1).<sup>6</sup> He called them in every generation to rebuke and chastise those who do evil, also the wicked. To straighten out and direct sinners (*hata'im*) in the law (*b'mishpat*) in place of their making the festival burnt offerings (*olah mo'adim*). Always He established for us righteous and upright people (*zaddik im va-yasharim*) who will defend their generations and will be before Him like his angels, beloved and precious.

To make worthy, to purify and to sanctify the public, to teach them and instruct them in the path and manner of being those who praise and unite His Name, to His holy Name which created the angels and human beings [lit. upper and lower beings] who praise, exalt and acknowledge [Him]. His praises and adulation, they magnified, and His wondrous deeds they recount to his creations. His awesome deeds they tell and praised with the tongue of the pious. And furthermore, His mercy (*hasdo*) and His truth did not depart from His faithful, mighty ones, His servants, those who do His bidding, who are singular and special in their generations. To establish for them men—sages, [men of] understanding (*nevonim*) who are known for their wisdom—in His mercy, to augment their wisdom (*hokhmah*) and understanding (*binah*), to grace them with the spirit of knowledge (*ru'ah ha-da'at*) and fear of the Lord, to compose books to augment their already considerable holiness and their purity always. Just as the mighty, holy, our rabbi, Judah the Pious did, who is the greatest of the pious ones. He weighed, investigated and established (*tikken*) this wondrous book, which put its name on the earth (Psalms 46:9): The Book of the Pious.<sup>7</sup>

We must praise the God of Israel<sup>8</sup> who in the greatness of His lovingkindness and the abundance of His goodness, from the place of His habitation looked forth, and did choose the House of Jacob that His glory might dwell amongst them, that they might love and fear Him and serve Him and adhere unto Him, for this is the ultimate human happiness concerning which many of them

<sup>6</sup> Once again, see the discussion of this verse as it is cited on the title page.

<sup>7</sup> This paragraph is copied from the introduction to the first edition.

<sup>8</sup> This phrase, "We must praise the God of Israel" is adapted from the first words of the well-known *alienu l'shabeyah* prayer in the Jewish liturgy, which begins, "We must praise the Lord of all."

who are wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight have been perplexed and have walked along in darkness. He prepared the way for us, the way of life, which without them would be very distant, who could find it, unless there shined upon his countenance the true light, which is radiance of the Shekhinah. The rock from which we were hewn, a tried stone, the foundation stone on which the world was founded, he is Abraham our Father, peace be upon him, who at three years of age, knew his Creator, and from the day he attained reason, called many with him to His service, may he be blessed. Also, after him, he commanded his sons to observe the path of the Lord and his laws (*toratav*), as it is written, “For I have singled him out, so that he might instruct his children and his posterity to keep the way of the Lord...” (Genesis 18:19). And as it is written regarding Solomon, peace be upon him, “Know the God of your father, and serve Him...” (1 Chronicles 28:9). Thus, generation after generation fathers will take hold of their children, and adults will warn children to keep the Torah of the Lord and its laws and its commandments (Deuteronomy 6:2), its fences, its ordinances and its decrees. The rabbi to his students, they would transmit short principles, orally, through well known mnemonic devices (*simanim yedu'im*), as it says, “Put it in their mouths...” (Deuteronomy 31:19). When troubles prevailed upon us, and the exiles multiplied, forgetfulness (*shokhaḥot*) became frequent, and the disputes and opinions multiplied among the students who did not achieve sufficient study, and some of them used to permit themselves to write in a book some of what they had received from the mouths of their rabbis, and they would call [such books] a “scroll of orders” (*megillat sedarim*). Some of them [are called] a “sequestered scroll” (*megillat setarim*). They are made up of what they received of the reasons for the commandments (*ta'amei ha-mitzvot*) or pleasant, literal scriptural interpretations (*peshatim ne'imim*), homilies, ethical teachings, good and upright virtues, and proper conduct. All of it they wrote in a scroll, as a book of remembrances. And in this manner, the axis of Sefer Ḥasidim revolves (*v'al zeh derekh sovev kotev*)—including [the aforementioned] matters. This is the reason why one will find among them stammering, distorted and stiff language. Sometimes [there are passages] transmitted many times repetitiously (*kefulot u-mekhupalot*). [There are] verbal mix-ups that came [into the text] at various points and they removed them according to reason (Ecclesiastes 5:15). For, our reward is with us and our actions [are] before God (Isaiah 40:10), with respect to the statements of the tales and the occurrences that are recounted from all that was expounded to us—the words themselves and their meaning (*milei d-alma u-gufei d-uvdah*)—to expound on them intelligently and with good sense. Indeed, what the mighty, pious composer of blessed memory added are pure and refined words. One cannot banish even a little of the damage which befell in it. It is insignificant (*batel ba-miyuto*) compared to the much benefit that is in it, in the pearls of wisdom, important virtues and great homilies, along with the excerpt (lit. a copy, *ha-atakah*) of the novellae of our Rabbi Nissim Gaon, our Rabbi Isaac Alfasi, and an excerpt from of the Sequestered Scroll (*Megillat Setarim*). Especially presently, given that the Lord (lit. the Name, *ha-shem*), may He be blessed, made us worthy and illuminated our eyes to find a very ancient book, written and corrected from all the errors which every eye sees: Tablets and fragments of tablets, are placed before Him (BT Berahot 8a), together like one. He will see in the light of the intellect the difference between them is as



light is superior to darkness (Ecclesiastes 2:13). For light can only be recognized within darkness.<sup>9</sup>

And accordingly, since there were not found in this the wondrous book notes (*ziyyunim*), we did not want to change its [the book's] meaning (*ta'am*) and damage it with the table of contents (lit. references, *simanim*) which predecessors established (Deuteronomy 19:14). Full of errors, their faces are "thorns" and "all grown over with thistles" (Proverbs 24:31). We also saw that there was no benefit to lengthen the book with them—as they said, "One should always teach the short way," (BT Pesahim 3a), and the converse does greater damage than benefit. For maybe they will rely on the short summaries (*kelalim kezarim*) which instruct about the root of the book (*soresh ha-sefer*) and they may never come to knowledge of the root of the idea (*soresh ha-inyan*). But, within [a short] time, one who inquires in the table of contents (lit. references, *simanim*) [in this edition] will come to the source of the book itself (*makor ha-sefer azmo*). Furthermore, whilst doing this, one who will undertake search after search within the book, they encounter many novellae before him since every passage has within it a novum.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, anyone who accustoms himself and his family to reading in it every day one portion and thereby he fulfill the obligation of his life (*hovat hayyav*): "A man must divide his years into thirds..." (BT Kiddushin 30a). From what source do we derive all that is in it? "Turn it and turn it, for everything is in it" (M Avot 5:22). Therefore, we chose a long and a short way to make references including laws (*dinim*) that are put forward and the tales. The rest of the novellae we left alone generally in their length in order to read all of them every day one portion, as was mentioned. For whatever way we may extract the pearl from the sand, there is no harm and no reason for fear, as the Guide [of the Perplexed] says in his introduction. One who reads in it every day "is promised that he is a child of the world to come" (BT Nidah 73a) and will be worthy enough "to see the pleasantness of the Lord and to visit His sanctuary" (Psalms 27:4) and "His Glory everyone says" (Psalms 29:9). It is written, "Upon you the Lord will shine and upon you His Glory will be seen" (Isaiah 60:2) and "For the Lord shall be your light everlasting" (Isaiah 60:19). Amen, may it be God's will.

For the sake of understanding the profit of this book and its fruits like a set table (*shulhan arukh*) prepared before all who seek the Lord and His fear decreed hints and short rules to open a doorway and a gate with keys (*maftehot*). They will find easily all the pleasures of the King (Genesis 49:20), King of the universe.<sup>11</sup> This is the ornament to lift up the heads of their gates and to find the eternal doors (Psalms 24:7). All of it is eternal and all of it is good.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> This statement is a variation on one in Aramaic found in the *Zohar*, Tetzaveh, 184, "לית נהורא אלא ההוא דנפיק מגו" and is emblematic of Luzzatto's familiarity with *kabbalah* and the *Zohar*.

<sup>10</sup> This is a play on Exodus 13:30, "There was no house that did not have within it a corpse."

<sup>11</sup> This paragraph is a paraphrase of the last paragraph of the introduction to the first edition.

<sup>12</sup> This last sentence is a variation on BT Hullin 142b, which itself is an exposition of Deuteronomy 22:7.